IN UNITY

MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP
OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES
MAY/JUNE 1981

INTERVIEW WITH

BILLY GRAHAM: "America Is Not God's Only Kingdom"

SAMARITAN
THEOLOGICAL
INSTITUTE

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

GROWTH IN GRACE

Christian Education
for the Local Church

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE
The Final Report

OUR NEW MCC CLERGY
Part 2

COMPLETE GENERAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM BOOKLET INSIDE

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MAY/JUNE 1981

Offices: 5300 Santa Monica Boulevard • Suite 304 • Los Angeles, California 90029 • (213) 464-5100

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A Model for Christian Education In the Local Church

Betty A. Brolsma

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INSIDE IN UNITY

In this issue of IN UNITY, the Rev. Billy Graham speaks out on issues of nationalism, secularized religion, and the objectification of persons by religionists of the New Right. This copyrighted interview is reprinted by permission of PARADE magazine.

The reader will also find in these pages a look at our educational institution, Samaritan Theological Institute, together with timely comments from its Executive Director. A companion article by Betty A. Brolsma suggests a model for implementing a Christian Education program in our churches.

Also featured are the Final Report of the Inclusive Language Task Force, the remaining article on New Clergy who were licensed in August, 1980, and a report on the successful protest fast of the Rev. Brent Hawkes of MCC Toronto, Canada.

We further develop our regular columns this issue by adding a new department: ANSWERED PRAYERS. Your input is very much needed for this continuing column. See the note at the bottom of page 26.

We have also re-instated the LAY PAGE as a regular feature, after a long absence. Dr. Richard Follett, Lay Page Editor, solicits input from all lay people in the Fellowship. See page 24 for the details.

Another new feature of this issue is the introduction of paid display advertising. Our first commercial advertiser is the INN ON CASTRO of San Francisco, and we welcome them to our pages. Through substantial commercial advertising in future issues, we hope to be able to increase IN UNITY'S revenues sufficiently to cover all magazine expenses, and to provide the means to improve the quality and coverage of the magazine.

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All ad contents must conform to the Editorial Policy (see page 30), and ads which involve tobacco, alcoholic beverages, or sexually-oriented services or products cannot be accepted. Further information is available by writing or calling IN UNITY.

Finally, we regret the delay in delivering this issue to you. Many deadline and production problems contributed to it. The July/August issue, which will feature General Conference 10, will follow shortly. ENJOY IN UNITY! ●

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SHARING AND GROWING

By Rev. Richard R. Mickley, M.A.

Rev. Mickley has taken a leave of absence to obtain a doctor's degree in Clinical Psychology.

He has obtained his master's degree in counseling psychology and his master's thesis is a handbook of enrichment ideas intended for use as a self-help manual for gay men in a committed relationship, or for those who wish they were, or for those who counsel men in committed gay relationships.

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IN UNITY

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LETTERS

CONGRATULATIONS on a fine-looking issue!! And on a *good* spectrum of content (and a *reasonable* weight of paper!)!! You done good!

Love,

Jean Gralley

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Ms. Gralley is chair of the UFMCC Commission on Laity. She contributes the LAY-UPS cartoon strips to IN UNITY, and previously did graphics and layout for the magazine. She was Interim Editor of the October/November 1979 issue of IN UNITY.)

I want to express my joy at the latest issue of IN UNITY. It was the first issue of IN UNITY I have read in many years that did not discourage my faith. I wouldn't even be embarrassed if an outsider or a new MCCer read it. I am astonished! Has good taste, propriety and responsible journalism found a permanent home in IN UNITY at last? I can only hope. At least it does not read as though the title should be In Disharmony.

Congratulations on a fine publication! Keep up the good work and I might even re-subscribe!

Ken Collins
Falls Church, VA

Public Service Advertisement

Our Gay & Lesbian ancestors have left us a vibrant legacy of facts, feelings and memories we must not let slip away. Support the

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DO IT TODAY . . . IT'S IMPORTANT. Minimum Membership $10.00

I have been asked to relay to you, by the members of our congregation, a hearty praise of appreciation for a job "well done." Our people have consistently commented that the last issue of IN UNITY was the best issue they have read in a long time. It's professionalism certainly was evident. Our church totally agrees with the new editorial policies if this is evidence of the kind of work this review board puts out.

Keep up the good work and keep on keeping on! May God richly bless you, this fellowship and our unity together in love.

In Christ's love,

Rev. F. Randall (Randy) Hill
Interim Pastor
Truth Chapel MCC
Tucson, AZ

Congratulations for publishing such a professional and balanced issue of IN UNITY (Apr/Mar 81). As a person who earns "their daily bread" as a professional writer and editor, I can well appreciate what a difficult task you faced in assuming responsibility for editing a magazine claiming to represent as diverse and often controversial group as the Universal Fellowship! In this issue you have succeeded in the mandate given you by the Elders without sacrificing either editorial or journalistic integrity. Bravo!! The focus was magnificent for our work will succeed or die to the extent that we follow Christ's Great Commission to spread the Good News to all of humanity.

I especially liked the cover design/layout, the table of contents layout, and the special columns such as "Forum" and "Reflections." Also, please, please, keep those terrific cartoons coming from Jeannie Gralley's talented pen (and thought-provoking wit!). I have long felt that they should be required reading before local board and congregational meetings!!

I do hope that future issues will include more photographs, especially from local churches and districts (maybe these should be solicited?). Seeing our sisters and brothers in action around the world brings our UFMCC "family" closer together and sparks unifying contacts.

One comment on Rev. Dusty Pruitt's article ("A Day's Pay for a Day's Work"). I agree we need better education about tithing and stewardship in our local churches. But I don't think Rev. Pruitt touched one crucial area in her fine presentation. MCC ministers' salaries would be better compared to the median and average salaries of MCC lay members than to doctors and truck drivers. My experience in three MCCs is that many if not most parishioners themselves live at or below the poverty level. Only a small minority (most of whom tithe) have salaries matching those shown in the graph. Until this situation changes, I doubt that 52 stewardship sermons yearly will do much to improve what is admittedly an unsatisfactory condition for clerical salaries.

Once again, thank you for producing such an excellent magazine. Keep up the good work.

God's Grace be with you,

Chet Snow
Clerk, MCC of the Redwoods
Fairfax (Marin County), CA

In the March/April issue, in the article "Journey to Israel," there is an erroneous explanation of the use C.E. and B.C.E. The letters BCE stand for "Before Common Era" and is used instead of BC. I presume the author meant to say November 6, 1980 CE, and not BCE.

Sincerely yours,
James C. Hostetler
Richmond, VA

Letters to IN UNITY are welcome, and are printed as space and interest allow. All letters should be written in inclusive language or they will be edited to follow the guidelines established by the General Conference. Letters must be signed or they cannot be published. The editor reserves the right to edit or reject any letter for length, clarification, or with regard to libel. Letters must conform to other provisions of the Editorial Policy as well.

INTERVIEW WITH

BILLY GRAHAM: "America Is Not God's Only Kingdom"

by Marguerite Michaels

"Communism is inspired, directed and motivated by the Devil himself," railed the evangelist. "America is at a crossroad. Will we turn to the left-wingers and atheists, or will we turn to the right and embrace the Cross?"

The Rev. Jerry Falwell, 1981?

No. The Rev. Billy Graham, 1949. That was the kind of three-alarm rhetoric that catapulted Graham to super-evangelistic stardom in the '50s and '60s. He eagerly functioned—and was eagerly sought—as God's seal of approval on three Presidents' Administrations. He played golf with Dwight Eisenhower, swam nude in the White House pool with Lyndon Johnson and defended his "close friend" Richard Nixon as "a man of high moral principles and integrity" who could not have been involved in any bugging or break-in "shenanigans."

Watergate was a watershed for Billy Graham. "I am out of politics," he says now.

And Graham is frankly worried that Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority is not.

Moral Majority, Inc., a conservative political action organization led by TV evangelist Falwell, is dedicated to the return of "morality" in America. Its "agenda for the '80s" is pro-family, pro-life and against the ERA, gay rights, pornography, SALT II and defense cuts.

"It would be unfortunate if people got the impression all evangelists belong to that group," says Graham. "The majority do not. I don't wish to be identified with them.

"I'm for morality. But morality goes beyond sex to human freedom and social justice. We as clergy know so very little to speak out with such authority on the Panama Canal or superiority of armaments. Evangelists can't be closely identified with any particular party or person. We have to stand in the middle in order to preach to all people, right and left. I haven't been faithful to my own advice in the past. I will be in the future."

Billy Graham has talked with Jerry Falwell. 'I told him to preach the Gospel. That's our calling. I want to preserve the purity of the Gospel and the freedom of religion in America. I don't want to see religious bigotry in any form. Liberals organized in the '60s, and conservatives certainly have a right to organize in the '80s, but it would disturb me if there was a wedding between the religious fundamentalists and the political right. The hard right has no interest in religion except to manipulate it."

"I appreciate his concern," says Falwell. "When I'm in the pulpit, my ministry is the Gospel. But I reserve the right as a responsible, concerned,. tax-paying citizen to speak out on conditions of the country that have brought about frustration and terrific unrest. I'm sorry if people find the two hats I wear confusing. The alternative is to be silent. I can't do that."

The Billy Graham who preached that God was on our side during the Cold War of the '50s wants no part of a Cold War in the '80s. Thirty years and more than 50 countries later, Reverend Graham has decided that God doesn't choose countries. God chooses people.

"It was a mistake to identify the kingdom of God with the American way of life," says Graham. "I've come to see that other cultures have their own way that may be of just as great a value. I think we consume too much, and I think we have become too materialistic. I spend half my time abroad now. I feel that God has called me to a world ministry. I don't look upon myself as an ambassador of the United States, as I did at one time. I look upon myself as a world ambassador."

Graham no longer sees Communists as "disciples of Lucifer."

I've lost some of the rigidity I once had," he says. "There are still some people who think that Christians must be in revolt against any government that is not Christian. But that's not what the Bible says: 'I became all things to all men, in order that I might by all means save some.' [1 Corinthians.] I take that to mean I should adapt myself to different social conditions."

Graham has held crusades in Hungary and Poland and is negotiating to speak in the Soviet Union at the invitation of the Baptists there.

His most stunning turnabout was his endorsement of nuclear disarmament and the SALT II treaty. "I don't believe in unilateral disarmament," says Graham. "I am not a pacifist. There is a possibility in working out some sort of an arrangement of arms control and hopefully, someday, a SALT X—the destruction of nuclear and chemical weapons which can destroy the human race. Somebody said that if the '60s were the age of rebellion, and the '70s were the age of frustration, the '80s will be the decade of survival. I am cautiously optimistic."

Graham admits to a certain "mellowing" of his views at age 62. "Frankly, I wish I'd read more and spoke less," says Graham. "I've come to understand there are no simplistic answers to the exceedingly complicated problems we face as a country—and as a planet."

"It would disturb me if there was a wedding between religious fundamentalists and the political right. The hard right has no interest in religion except to manipulate it."

What hasn't mellowed at all is Graham's Biblical message. "We evangelists believe that we have really found Christ. Something to give us security and stability in an insecure world, and a peace and joy in a country that is desperately trying to find purpose and meaning for itself. The message of Jesus Christ is 'I forgive your sins, give you security and stability, purpose and meaning, in this life and in a life to come.' "

Graham says he never expected his public ministry to last this long. The crusades are fewer, and shorter, but still fatiguing. Thirty years of hotel rooms have taken their toll on a never very healthy Graham. The aura of electric energy that used to surround him is gone.

"I'm human," says Graham. "Sometimes I wish it were over. I thought by this time it would be. I'd like to spend the rest of my life writing and getting to know my 15 grandchildren. But as long as people are still responding—we broke stadium records in Japan last year—I'll continue to preach. There is such fear in the world—of starvation, of war. The world has become a neighborhood without being a brotherhood. I think there's a nostalgia for morality and standards. Young people want to be told what's right and wrong. The moral permissiveness has gone too far. It hasn't satisfied. There is a search for something more to life than sex or drugs.

"I have two primary objectives in the balance of my days of active ministry," Graham says. "One is to keep on doing what I've been doing—preaching the Gospel in auditoriums and on television all over the world. Second, I want to work for world peace. I feel that the arms race is way out of hand and that I can make a small contribution in talking to all sides on this thing."

"I think Billy Graham has lost some of his shine in this country," says Baptist minister Dr. Edmund Irvin, who nevertheless invited Graham to crusade in Reno, Nev. "But he has emerged out of Watergate as a strong worldwide figure. Besides, nobody else is taking his place. He is the only one still delivering the mainline evangelical tradition of the New Testament. We need Billy Graham. He calls us back to our Biblical roots of faith. He has changed. He is much more open ecumenically and has a greater social sensitivity. He is mature—almost gentle."

"I would hope my ministry is more effective, if less spectacular," says Graham.

The crusade in Reno was a smashing success. The crusade immediately following it in Las Vegas was not.

The Rev. Billy Graham is not America's "hot" evangelist anymore. His Evangelistic Association budget is half of TV star Jerry Falwell's $60 million. And although establishment churchmen are more comfortable with Graham than with Falwell, Graham's mellowing seems out of step with America's politically active, aggressive, opinionated television evangelists. It is clear that Billy Graham is still admired. But more as a monument to the past than as a leader of the future.

"I'd like to continue to speak out on social issues," says Graham. "To provide some balance. We could easily be facing racial problems again. I'm not sure who's listening."

Steve McQueen did. "I spent the second to last day of his life with Steve," says Graham. "Talking to him. Praying with him. He had accepted Christ about three months before he knew he was ill. And he said that he had wanted to do it for 15 years. I was driven by one of his men from Los Angeles out to his ranch near Ventura. I went on the plane with him before he left for his operation. We prayed two or three times, and I gave him the Testament I had used all over Japan. He was full of fire and energy, although he looked like a 90-year-old man. I think he thought all the tumors in his body had been eradicated except this big one. He told me that he only had a 40 percent chance of surviving the operation but that he was ready to go. 'I'll see you in heaven,' he said. That was a wonderful thing, coming from a fella who had lived the kind of life Steve lived. I'd never met him before.

"Muhammad Ali came recently and spent the day with me. I think he'd like to serve the Lord in some capacity. He's had a double blow: Larry Holmes' fists and Mr. Carter's loss. I think he is in a position to be a peacemaker for the Lord between East and West, between Islam and Christianity. I'm going to talk to him."

"He's not caught up with celebrities," says his wife, Ruth Bell Graham. "He just uses their names to keep people's interest." Mrs. Graham—who advised Billy not to found a college or run for office or star in a movie when those "temptations" were offered over the years—says her husband's judgment "has matured. He's getting his priorities straight. What's important is that he bring people to Jesus Christ. That is his calling. Do I miss all those invitations to the White House? Nope. It's a relief. It is not a comfortable place."

But Billy misses it. The Billy who grew up on a dairy farm in Charlotte, N.C. The Billy who once believed that America was God's favorite country. The memories the Reverend Billy Graham has of the Presidents are still reverent.

continued on page 8

"It was my privilege to know these men," says Graham. "I tried to steer the conversations to spiritual things. They didn't really look to me for political advice. Sometimes I gave it anyway. I wish I hadn't. You know, really, you could take all the time that I've spent with all the Presidents and probably put it in a month's period. Maybe two months. Ninety percent of my time is spent with ordinary people."

But his stories are not about those people. "You know, President Johnson had already asked me to speak at his funeral before he died. He had taken me out and showed me where he wanted to be buried–told me even what to say. 'Billy,' he said, 'someday you'll stand under this tree. I'll be buried right here.' And he said, 'You preach the Gospel but tell 'em a little something of what I did.' Of course–he was the President. But he had been to a funeral of a former governor of Tennessee, and he said the preacher never mentioned anything that the governor had ever done. He thought that was terrible.

"I've tried to be friends in politics with people on both sides. I spent more time with Johnson than I did with Nixon, but nobody ever knew because of Watergate. I would never refuse a President. I was honored.

"You know, I still admire Mr. Nixon," adds Graham. "I do not approve of some of the things he said or did. They sounded like a bunch of thugs on those tapes, sitting around planning some sort of big illegal operation. That was not Nixon. I think he was not himself. He was trying to protect some friends. I've talked to a lot of people who knew him in a different area than I did. They said they never heard him talk that way either. I think he's back now. I understand some of the memos that he gave to Reagan were the most brilliant memos on foreign policy that Reagan received."

The first time Billy Graham swore off politics was in 1956. Embarrassed by "immature" political statements, he said: "I have learned better now and remain completely outside party politics." Confusing bipartisan with nonpartisan, Billy has never been outside party politics. Although he has been mostly outside the last two White Houses, the temptation still remains to measure the meaningfulness of his ministry by his access to the Oval Office:

"Well, you know, I've known Ronald Reagan for 25 years," Graham said shortly after the election. "He is not ideologically rigid. I called the day after the election and just left a message of congratulations with his secretary. He called back himself two hours later. I'm not a confidant. But I will be a friend of Ronald Reagan if he ever asks me to come to the White House.

"I have been invited to the inauguration, but I have a previous commitment for the same day in England, at Cambridge. My wife has just quoted to me a Bible text on the sacredness of commitment. I don't know what I'll do. There are going to be so many celebrities at the inauguration . . . I won't even be noticed . . . ." ●

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TOGETHER

I love you,
You love me.
That's the way it's got to be,
When we're together.
So in love together

I make you happy,
and you make me.
That's the way it's got to be,
When we're together.
So in love together

But I'm not the me that I know I should be,
And it's tearing me apart,
When we're together.
So hard when we're together.

I can't be me 'cause I can't hurt you,
And that's just what being me would do,
So you're together --
You and this stranger.

You wouldn't hurt me 'cause your love is true,
But I can't be me so that's what you do,
When we're together,
So hard when we're together.

Well, how long can we last?
I really don't know,
But both of us are trying to make it go,
When we're together,
We try to stay together.

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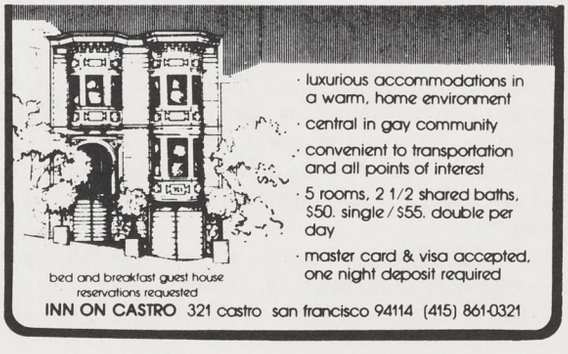
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TURNING MEAN:
Minority Cannibalism and the UFMCC

Martin Marty, a contributing editor of *Christian Century*, wrote recently that he had stopped classing Christians in the old, traditional groupings of catholic, evangelical, radical, etc. Rather, he said he had come to believe that there are only two relevant categories: mean and non-mean. He classed himself as "half-mean." I am struck at the wisdom of his observation and am certain (relatively) that it cuts to the heart of our current situation in the Metropolitan Community Churches. Hither and yon MCCers are crying for one another's spiritual scalps. Many of us are wildly dashing about trampling upon the beliefs and symbols held dear by others. Issues of controversy, which have existed throughout my ten years in the Fellowship, are suddenly battlegrounds for every imaginable faction and persuasion. And don't we fight dirty! We seem in general to be making a first class sideshow of ourselves and our church.

For a time I was sure that the problems arose out of deeply held theological beliefs; our "conservatives" clashing with our "radicals," "fundamentalism" at war with "liberalism," Light and Darkness, Truth and Falsity clutching at one another! Our fate as a work of God was hanging in the balance. Now I believe that I have taken myself and we have taken ourselves, far too seriously. And isn't that a common ailment of the self-righteous.

No, it is too self-serving to see ourselves as engaged in the defense of the truth against falsehood. Instead, I believe there is a simpler, far less grandiose explanation. What we may be seeing is simply the process whereby small, new, weak, minority groups, weary of their battle against their true opponents, turn upon and devour themselves. It is the same process that afflicts the two largest homosexual rights groups in the US. It is the same process that has rendered impotent all efforts at protecting gay and lesbian people in the birthplace of the modern gay movement, New York City. So fractious has our community politics become there that efforts to *give* the community a commemorative statue celebrating the Stonewall disorders have gotten nowhere as every sort of sub-group in our community busily undercuts the other with few working for the common good. Such gross disunity, such cannibalism is not without its penalties. New York City has never passed a statute protecting its homosexual citizens from discrimination. Our opponents look on with glee as we destroy our own work. It saves them from having to organize.

So I believe it is with us in this 13 year old Fellowship. The effort to be a church where our people, where all people, are truly welcome is apparently proving too much for us. We face such massive odds! Our opponents are so strong! The bright energy of our first years, now dimmed, confronts the humdrum reality of ongoing congregational and Fellowship life. And we don't like what we see. Unsure of our approach to the world around us, we find easier targets within our own ranks. So we feed on ourselves.

So then, let us fight! Let's write and publish more violently angry letters which resort even to personal ridicule and invective. Let's have more caustic editors throw down more gauntlets. Let's have more congregations express their arrogance and indifference to the genuine faith struggles of others and more commissions ignore raging controversy while exploring only half the issue they were set up to examine. Indeed, if we choose we can tear outselves apart.

Just let us not fool ourselves about why we are doing it. We aren't turning in defense of faith, truth, and light. We're just turning mean.

–Rev. A. Richard Weatherly
MCC San Francisco, CA

FORUM is an opinion column, open to expression from the UFMCC family on topics of current interest. The statements made are the opinions of the writer, and do not necessarily reflect the position of the UFMCC, the Board of Elders, or the editorial staff. No claim or warrant of accuracy is made by IN UNITY for statements appearing in FORUM. Articles will be accepted in accord with the current Editorial Policy and within the limitations of space and the currency of interest in the subject matter.

Striving for Excellence

A Look at UFMCC's Samaritan Theological Institute

(Adapted from the STI Report to General Conference 10)

Samaritan Theological Institute, since its inception, has been seen as too liberal by some, too conservative by others. By all, STI *should* be seen as an Institute seeking open truth in the full service of God. Regardless of the perspective some may have on the Institute, we have remained conscious of the solid foundation on which STI was established and have attempted to build upon that foundation toward the expanded vision of what STI could and should be. This report highlights our last two years of progress and points toward our exciting future.

Students:

As of 1 May, 17 students were enrolled in the 3rd Quarter resident program. This enrollment was down from 30 in the 1st Quarter of the 1980/1981 academic year due to prerequisites for three of the four courses offered.

The Division of Extended Studies had 87 active students in its correspondence courses as of 1 May 1981. Nearly 150 students were on the inactive list at that time.

STI has had approximately 1,000 students in its resident and extension programs since its founding in 1970.

Faculty:

The resident and extension faculty has increased over the past two years. STI is currently reaching out for more faculty members, both UFMCC and non-UFMCC members. Contacts have been made to bring in rabbis for Old Testament Insights, lay leaders in finance and administration courses, and educators with diverse views.

As of this writing, the resident faculty is meeting every other week as a curriculum review committee-as-a-whole to revamp the structure of STI's courses (See Curriculum).

Staff:

The Reverend Jeffrey D. Pulling has completed five years of service as Dean of STI and has become the Director of STI's Resource Center in Oakland, California. The Reverend J. Dennis "Pepper" Shields is the Dean of Extended Studies and the Registrar of the Resident College. Mr. Terry L. Stiles continues to serve as Coordinator of the EXCEL Movement (which has now expanded into Northern California and Arizona). In February 1981, Dr. Richard J. Follett joined STI as Executive Director and as Dean of the Resident College. The Reverend Lucia A. Chappelle joined the staff in March 1981 as the Administrative Assistant.

Additional staff members are needed in financial planning, curriculum coordination and development, correspondence development and promotion, and clerical assistance. Volunteer help has been donated by several friends of STI.

Curriculum:

In the past two academic years, STI has strengthened its educational programs. The faculty has recommended a shift from the present Quarter system to a Trimester academic year as follows:

1st Semester:
September - December

Interterm:
January

2nd Semester:
February - May

Summer Semester:
June-July/July-August
(flexible)

The advantages of this scheduling are numerous: among these are greater responsiveness to international students who may wish to attend STI for short courses, more depth in a semester course than a quarter course, and flexibility of special programs. In addition to the calendar change, a daytime program is being developed to complement the current evening program. We have noted that the completion of our two year academic program (upper level college courses) currently takes three years, since only four classes per quarter have been offered in the evening program. By having both day and evening classes, students will be able to complete their education through STI in a more reasonable length of time.

Recognizing the need for greater Religious Education throughout the Fellowship, the Division of Extended Studies plans to introduce a minimum of two additional correspondence courses in the new catalog. Additional trained personnel in correspondence course development are actively being sought.

Facilities:

In March 1981, STI doubled its facilities by taking over the adjacent office suite in its present location at 5300 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 104, Los Angeles, CA 90029, U.S.A. Even so, only 15 students per class could be accommodated.

On 1 June, 1981, STI rented two classrooms directly across the hall from the offices. One classroom seats 30 students, the other 20. Thus, STI's physical growth reflects the realities of the school's reach toward its potential.

Expansion:

STI is actively exploring expansion programs in other geographical locations

to better serve the Fellowship's needs. The Division of Extended Studies has contacted various potential faculty members and is working hard to develop regional programs and centers.

The Resource Center, under development in Oakland, California, is doing ground-breaking work for the Fellowship in making contacts with other seminaries in program and student interchanges.

The EXCEL Movement is reaching out into locations beyond southern California to train new teams for the EXCEL weekend experiences and the continuing support groups in the EXCEL program.

Regents:

The Board of Regents, appointed by the Board of Elders, met for the first time on 8 March 1981. The following officers were named: Reverend James Sandmire, Chair; Dr. Alice Kitchen, Vice-Chair; Reverend Elder Nancy Wilson, Secretary/Clerk. Additional members were Mr. Gilberto Gerald, Reverend Elder John Hose, and Dr. Don Jolly. The Reverend Nancy Wilson resigned due to time commitments in February 1981. At its March 1981 meeting, the Board of Elders appointed Reverend Elder Jeri Ann Harvey to replace her. The Reverend Sandmire, due to dual pastorates, has announced his resignation effective at General Conference in Houston.

Funding:

The annual budgets for the past two years have been compared in preparing this written report. Of note is the close relationship between receipts and expenditures for the last two years, the extremely limited monies spent on the library and on the purchase of necessary educational materials, and the various funding sources.

STI is writing major grant requests for program expansion, for paying faculty members for teaching and research, for library acquisitions and a half-time librarian, and for self-sustaining equipment. In addition, the Samaritan Sunday giving has increased over the last two years. However, it should be clearly noted that the Fellowship has not funded Samaritan Theological Institute appropriately for its service potential in educational support: a brief look at the Fellowship's budgets over the last two years shows STI, the major Religious Education source, with only approximately 2.5% of the budget allocation. Such a low figure of financial support should be rectified at the Houston General Conference, and a Resolution is being submitted to increase that support to 7%. While STI is working to become financially self-sustaining, it will continue to need Fellowship financial support for the near future. Such support will allow the STI dream to become the reality God has promised.

The Future

STI has been receiving input from around the world in its program development. We want to be responsive to the needs of the Fellowship and to provide quality education for STI Students, both resident and extension. Funding is urgently needed, but it is not our primary need. What we need *most* is prayer support, for prayer will help us maintain proper perspectives and direct our energies rightly. Second, we need the support of ideas from around the Fellowship. As an open agency seeking truth, we need positive and negative feedback directly to the Institute; we need to compile and share the good ideas of all our Fellowship members and friends and to make these suggestions available to the Fellowship at large. When we have these two needs in proper place, we will then best be able to channel the supporting funds into proper use.

STI is a dream that is becoming a reality. It is exciting and joyful to see God working with and through this open Institute. ●

FACING THE FUTURE

From an interview with Dr. Richard Follett, Executive Director of STI.

"At STI, we very firmly believe the Biblical positions of "Come, let us reason together . . . " and "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." We believe that knowing the truth is liberating and frees up tremendous energy. Knowing that we are fully worthy of God's love is liberating: it is the liberation of the Gospel."

"The role of STI in the Fellowship must be to pursue truth wherever truth may take us, because God is truth. Jesus said, the Spirit of Truth will guide us into all truth (John 16:13)."

"STI must not be narrowly confined to irrelevant academic pursuits. Similarly, STI cannot permit a fragmentation of its mission that would limit its search for truth."

"I understand that some may see education as *intrinsically* dangerous. But with the leading of the Holy Spirit, Whom Jesus Himself said is the Spirit of Truth, there is no danger, there is only liberation. Further, if we are to claim the abundant life of John 10:10b, we cannot fear liberation or the knowledge that leads to that liberation. It is imperative that we surrender our enculturated myopia and allow God to replace it with the clear and inclusive vision available to every truth-seeking Christian pilgrim."

"As long as I am Executive Director of Samaritan Theological Institute, I personally pledge to every member, friend and foe of this Fellowship to do everything in my power to ensure the openness, honesty, and intellectual and spiritual integrity of our faculty, staff and students, so that God's truth may be proclaimed clearly without fear and intimidation."

"I anticipate opposition, and we at STI have already experienced some opposition. Our support, in contrast, has been twofold: 1) numerous letters, telephone calls, and gifts of time and money to STI; and 2) of greater importance, the calm inner assurance that we are doing the will of God."

"Like St. Joan in Shaw's play, we feel that if we are in God's Grace, may God keep us there; if we are not, may God bring us there. We welcome responsible Christian voices from all quarters in helping us to find the truth." ●

REFLECTIONS

AND AFTER DEATH, WHAT ?

The Apostle Paul stated that our mortality must put on immortality, and we believe that each human will do that - Whether we wish it or not, we are immortal. That part of us which survives may bear no more resemblance to us now than a wheat plant bears to the seed from which it sprung, but our individual personality will survive.

Paul further said that now we "see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face." I have in my bedroom an old mirror in a gilt frame. The glass is speckled and mottled and the mirroring is peeling. It is of little use as a mirror - returning a dim and distorted reflection. This is what Paul had in mind.

Now we see God as a weak reflection, distorted by the frail and physical medium through which God is now shown to us, in the world and in each other.

But we are promised that we shall know God face to face. We shall know as we are known, and we are known perfectly - in every detail and for all our lives.

I expect that after our physical death, the immortal part of us will find itself bared before the overpowering and relentless reality of Pure Love, for that is God's nature through and through.

For some of us, that "Beatific Vision" will be all we ever sought in life - and immeasurably more.

For others, it will be a burning, searing intrusion on the fortress of our Selves, which we have spent a lifetime constructing, brick by brick.

Some will enter into an eternity of rest and joy; and others into an eternity of alienation and resentment.

For all, God is the same and God's love flows outward everlastingly.

It is we who will receive that love either as Heaven or as Hell.

DAVID STIVISON

REFLECTIONS is a column of inspirational and devotional thought, based on Scripture passages, personal observations or experiences. Contributions from readers are encouraged, and must be signed to be published. Articles will be edited to conform to the Editorial Policy when necessary. When possible, the manuscript should be typewritten and double-spaced, and "REFLECTIONS" should be written at the top of the first page. Manuscripts can be returned only when accompanied with a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

TTY to UFMCC!

The UFMCC Office now has a TTY (teletypwriter) machine for telephone communication with our hearing-impaired members and friends! Hearing-impaired persons with TTY machines may now call the UFMCC Office number (213/464-5100), and will be able to talk to anyone in the offices. This equipment and subsequent phone company service charges have been made possible by a special contribution designated for this purpose. We praise God for this new avenue of communication!

IN UNITY has received the following letter from CERDIC-Universite Des Sciences Humaines De Strasbourg, Strasbourg, France. This represents a significant development in the worldwide visibility and credibility of IN UNITY.

February 17, 1981

Dear IN UNITY:

Since 1969, CERDIC has published each March its bibliographic repertory of Christian churches, RIC and RIC Supplements. (RIC is the abbreviation of the French title). This March inventory in RIC contains the publications for the preceding year, and now reaches about 80 countries. RIC Supplements are up to date bibliographies concerning specific topics.

The rapidity of this inventory and its wide dissemination is made possible by our use of a computer in analysing and coding the information we garner in five languages. The general index of 1500 key words enables the reader to grasp readily the nature of the documentation which reflects the different problems – ecclesiastical, liturgical, ecumenical, pastoral and sociological – current in the Christian churches.

The orientation of your publication is such that RIC includes it among the periodicals we analyze at depth, and so we would like to ask you to send us a complimentary copy of each issue as soon as it appears. We have found that the articles analyzed at the time of their appearance are evaluated more accurately than those examined at the end of the year, and that publications received regularly are thus guaranteed more attention.

Your inclusion in RIC and RIC Supplements should bear fruit for you in publicizing your journal in the eighty countries where we have subscribers. We hope, then, that you will be glad to include RIC on your mailing list. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

GROWTH IN GRACE

A Model for Christian Education in the Local Church

BETTY A. BROLSMA

Basic to our task in Christian Education is enabling our people to cope with themselves and with their world. We cannot separate Christian Education from the totality of our lives. We cannot deal with Christianity in a vacuum which does not relate to all of our emotions and reactions. If we are going to attempt to help our people live lives which are Christian – to "catch the faith" as it were – we must also deal with all of the areas of living which form our lives.

Unique Needs and Situations in UFMCC

The concept of learning or "catching" the faith as we interact with one another in a faith community probably best speaks to this need. In the UFMCC we have an added task, one which is unique to our Fellowship: we need to correlate all of our learning with the task of enabling people to live as Christian lesbian and gay persons in our world. This is more difficult for some than for others – influenced by a variety of predisposing factors.

Many of the factors which are unique to Christian Education in the UFMCC relate to the difficulties we all may have had simply growing and existing. Many of us are socially and/or emotionally immature, probably from the strictures placed upon us by society in dealing with our sexual identity. We have felt devalued and disenfranchised in many areas of our beings. In many cases we have been told we do not even have the right to exist as Christians. For all of these reasons, many are angry at God, at the "Church," and at anyone who would claim that God does indeed love us.

So then, basic to our task is the affirmation of our right, even our responsibility, to exist and to maintain as Christian lesbian and gay persons. Also, we need to affirm over and over that our faith is valid and pleasing to God. In meeting these goals we need to consider that our people come from many varied faith traditions. In addition, many have little practical background, knowledge, or experience in living and growing in the faith.

This being true, our primary task is to enable our people to accept themselves as valuable persons, with gifts, talents and faith which are valued by God. They must be enabled to understand that they – as the unique individuals they are – have a place and a purpose in this world. There are many ways in which this may be accomplished, using all the knowledge and resources available to us from many disciplines, including our faith. However, after we have called upon the knowledge, resources and direction of all other disciplines, we will still reach a point beyond which there is no agent but God alone by whom lives can be changed and enabled to go forward. We must use all the means available, but we must also understand that –beyond whatever entities are employed – there will still be God. There will come a point in each individual life when all the powers of reason and logic and understanding will not be enough. It is at this junction that every person must be *enabled* to *individually* turn to God to receive the strength, the courage, the enabling which are necessary. And, again, this will not happen in a vacuum. The means must be provided to explore all of the possibilities for learning and growing. But, also, there must be faithful people who are able to discern that point at which all other disciplines have reached their limits, the point at which the Spirit of God must intervene to enable the traveler to continue on this journey.

This may not be unique to MCC; it probably isn't. But persons who bear the internal anger, guilt and sense of unworthiness which many of us do, must be enabled to move beyond these crippling emotions to a full, complete and integrated life. And again, once we understand all of this, only God can be the total liberator.

continued

Suggestions for Education Programs in UFMCC

Having said all this, how can we design a Christian Education program for UFMCC? We may not be able to design any one program which will be applicable to every MCC, or even to a great many of them. Our church and our people may be too diverse and varied in so many ways for a single program to be usable throughout the Fellowship. Perhaps our task is to design several programs which relate to different church situations and make these available as possible choices to those who are interested.

Following that assumption, we will here concentrate on a Christian Education program for a small group (a Study Group or Mission), which has an involved, concerned pastor, a small or non-existent staff, and an involved, active core group of lay people. We will proceed from the idea that the majority of members and friends in this group are in the young or middle adult generations. Within these perimeters, we will proceed with the concept that true Christian Education takes place best – and probably only completely – within a faith community which learns and grows through the interactions of its members.

We consider a small faith community composed around a number of people-that number varies between 20 and 40, roughly. There are persons at all stages of spiritual and emotional growth, so we have, chronologically, two generations involved. However, if we look at the group in terms of spiritual and emotional maturity, the generation spread is much wider. It is true that no one can make judgments regarding another's spiritual growth, but we can safely assume that there is a wide range and we can plan with that in mind. Our responsibility is to plan a program which will reach the "babies" and also speak to those who are moving toward maturity.

It is incumbent upon us to include opportunities within our faith community which meet the needs of both of these groups. Since we are dealing with a relatively small group of people with quite varied interests, we cannot have a stilted, stylized program. It must be creative and allow for variation but it must also have a definitive goal. The goal is that each person involved be enabled to move toward maturity in each area of living as a Christian individual. This involves integration of all the facets of life – emotional, affectional, intellectual and spiritual. This is living behavior which is best learned in community. If I cannot go to my sisters and brothers for direction, guidance, encouragement and love then there is no other place to which I can turn.

This is a group of people which is attempting to be a faith community. Most of them would not recognize that term if they heard it, so its meaning and value must be demonstrated and recognized, often without the terminology. And basically that is what we do in our life together. Most of these people will see one another only once or twice a week in any announced gathering. Many will encounter one another at other times during the week. And these also are opportunities for growth, for "catching" the faith. (Most things which are communicable, whether they are germs or attitudes, do not require continuous contact to be "caught." Nevertheless, reinforcement of positive factors is necessary.

In designing the Christian Education program for this faith community, let us look first at those gatherings which are announced and planned. We first consider the period of time which is labled "Bible Study," "Adult Religious Experience," "Sunday School," or whatever title is appropriate. A label like "Exploring Life With God" or something similar recognizes that we are dealing with people who are adults chronologically. "Bible Study" tends to scare some people and "Sunday School" is a real turnoff for many. We need to choose even our designating titles carefully.

So, we have a group meeting at an established time. What shall that group do during this time? Since we are investigating life with God, the logical source book is the Bible, which delineates for us God's dealings with humanity thoughout history, from the distant past through our present time. We need to approach this book with the intention of allowing God's Spirit to speak to us through our study. We need a leader or leaders, not to be in a position of authority, but to facilitate the discussion and offer any further research they have done. The leader(s) must be willing to commit themselves to consistently fulfilling this responsibility, so that there are no interruptions in the pattern of study which has been established. Other members of the group should be encouraged to be consistent in attendance also.

A second specifically designated group time is the Sunday Worship Service. This is probably the primary time when the greatest number of members of the faith community come together. If this time is spent only in participating *individually* in the service, learning will occur, but this will not be education *in community*. However, if the people interact with one another during community prayer so that the concerns of one become the concerns of many and this is followed up by discussion, suggestions and encouragement at an appropriate time, then sharing of faith and self in community has occurred. If one person (or more) is sad, depressed or discouraged and others pick up on this and offer "a shoulder to cry on," ears that listen and hear, and love that cares, then the word that "God loves us as we are" becomes real and believable to that person--sharing of self and faith has occurred.

Examples like this are endless but the final criteria for faith-sharing in the context of a worship service is the interactions of the participants with one another. When worship facilitates this caring, when the content (all of it) causes people to react and respond and carry this response to one another, then Christian Education in the most inclusive sense has occurred.

All of the other structured-time activities, in which members of the faith community participate, can rightfully be considered as a part of the church Christian Education program. Because the range of interests and needs with which MCC churches deal is often different from those areas which are traditionally considered "appropriate" for "church involvement," there is a tendency to discount this type of activity as part of a "Christian Education program." This is a fallacy, because any activity which enables persons to deal with problems, grow in living, understand self and generally be better able to react with joy, is indeed learning which is Christian in the deepest sense.

It is not until individuals are able to cope with themselves where they are, that they will be able to take the step of relating to God in their lives. This is a factor which will always be in flux for

each individual; it will never be static. Our responsibility is to be constantly alert to and aware of areas of need and then be sure programs are available which speak to these concerns. Beyond this we must constantly remember that programs, groups and other activities have a built-in self-limitation: there will always be an area of need which no program, no matter how well devised, can meet. This is the need in each individual which only our miraculous God can fill. Therefore, all of our Christian Education programs must be geared to enable members of the faith community to share themselves and their faith with one another. But they must also be geared so that those who want to move into another expanded area of faith will have the opportunity to do so. This is not a hidden agenda, it is simply making all the resources of the faith community available to individual responses.

Practical Considerations for Planning

From a practical standpoint, how do we do all this? First, we assess needs and areas of concern. Then we design programs which speak to those concerns, being aware of all of the previously mentioned variables. Assume that in our faith community we have a number of people with substance-abuse problems. Our response to that should be to offer space and support for leaders to begin an A.T. group. Once formed, the members of this group will support one another in many ways, including relating to a "Higher Power." Other people from the larger lesbian and gay community will come to this meeting to seek help and support in their own fights against addiction. This help will be given and, in the process, the love and faith of our church community will be "caught" in varying degrees by the non-churched people and the church people will grow. One word of caution: The A.T. meeting must be there because it needs to be, not so that "the church may make converts." If our motivation is mixed, self-serving, the results will be questionable also.

Consider another area of concern for many people, particularly women. Assume that our faith community has a strong feminist consciousness. This very fact will awaken many women to the need for a women's rap group where feminism and other women's issues may be explored. Again, the need is there and our task is to respond to that need by providing space, time and leadership for this group. The same principles apply as to the A.T. meeting. Our responsibility is to provide the possibility for this group to enable the faith community to interrelate through it. They will learn and grow by sharing their lives with one another. Persons who are not yet members of this faith community will be attracted by the subjects and the interaction between the members and some will move from attending this group into the larger life of the faith community. They will "catch" the faith and want to continue to grow in their journey. Warning again: Our motives, including "hidden agendas," must be clear. The group must be enabled because it needs to be. The side effects of faith sharing and faith growing will follow, but this cannot be our primary goal. Our motivation must be to meet needs; the growth from this into learning to be Christian is the work of God's Spirit, not ourselves.

These same principles apply to many other areas in our faith community. Our task is to assess needs, enable the fulfilling of these needs within the context of our family, and to trust God that as persons share and grow and love together faith will be communicated and "caught." Each person in these groups will learn and grow at his/her own pace; faith will be multiplied as it is shared and we will indeed have education that is Christian.

There will be other activities in which "needs" is not the operative word. There will be special groups such as Worship Committee, Music Committee and Choir or Instrumental Practice. There will be social events such as picnics, dances, parties and special occasion dinners. There will be special time-limited groups such as Lenten Family gatherings. There will be work parties to improve the church building. There will be individual counseling, both by the pastor and other church members. (Sometimes these will not be "billed" as counseling sessions. They may occur when one member of the community calls another in pain or in joy.) There may be members of the community who attend school together or work together or who help one another to relocate. Of course, there will always be coffee before and after groups, and much sharing will take place in this context.

No matter what "label" we attach to these interactions, it is an inevitable fact that when members of our faith community relate to and share their lives and faith with one another, education which is Christian will result. One further comment: negative education is also possible whenever people interact. Part of our responsibility is to try to alleviate this possibility by prior preparation and the faith we ourselves share. Even more basic than this, we must continually ask God to guard and guide these attempts with the love and ability which are God's alone.

Probably the most basic task of Christian Education is to continually surround and uphold each of these human efforts in God's Spirit and love. This is not to say we "hope for the best" and ask God to straighten out our messes. But it does say that we recognize the over-riding power which must come from God. Our best efforts are demanded, and with these God will and does act in our history and lives.

What Can UFMCC Use From Traditional Sources ?

Having considered Christian Education in terms of all parts of our life together as a faith community, it becomes obvious that there is not a great deal of material from traditional sources which we can use. The traditional "Sunday School" material is geared to the nuclear family. Most of the "Bible Study" material which is available is not appropriate either. We do use the format from A.A. for the A.T. meetings. Knowledge and techniques from various secular disciplines are often applicable to some of our activities. However – perhaps unfortunately – most of the "religiously" oriented material is biased in ways which are unacceptable to us.

It seems that each individual congregation must use the talents and knowledge available to it to first assess that group's needs, and then to set out to plan how these needs may be met. The ways in which these needs will be dealt with will vary in terms of the congregational resources available.

Ideally, the UFMCC Christian Education Department might be able to develop guidelines assisting groups to do this. It is unrealistic to suppose that any one "program" could be developed which would be applicable to all groups. As stated previously, the differences in size, theology, emphasis and areas of concern are much too great for any monoform "program" to be useful. ●

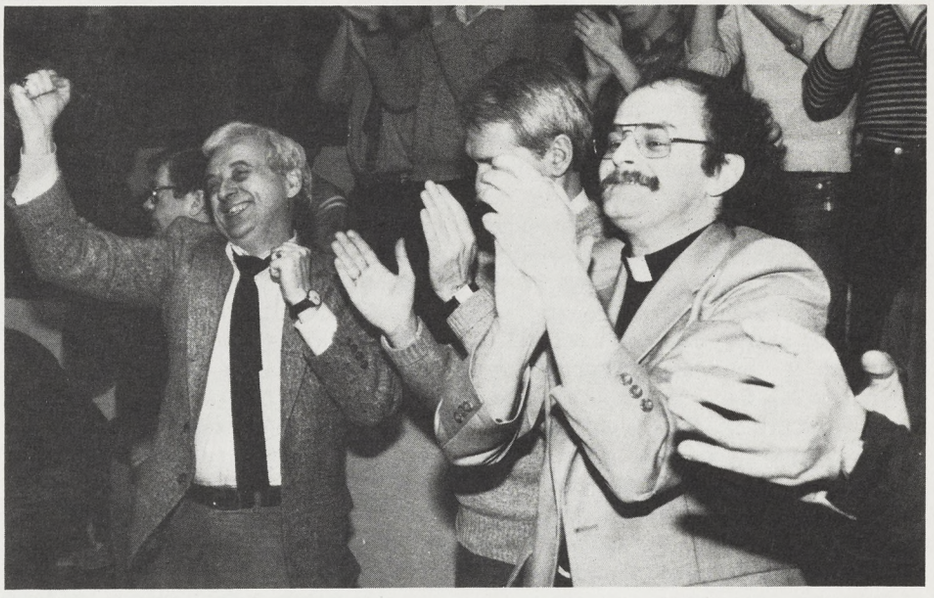
THE PRAYER

OF THE RIGHTEOUS

AVAILS MUCH

The Effective Fast & Prayer of the Reverend Brent Hawkes

by Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry



Local gay community leader George Hislop (left) and the Rev. Brent Hawkes, pastor of MCC-Toronto, with large crowd inside Toronto City Hall, cheer the decision of the Metro Council on Feb. 16 to seek an Attorney General's probe of the police raids.

When members of the UFMCC decide to involve themselves in Christian Social Action and give more than lip service to it, things are bound to happen.

In early February, the Toronto, Canada, police raided several gay baths, arresting more than 250 citizens and 20 employees. The names of the married men arrested were later published in a local newspaper. Newspapers also reported as many as 5,000 local citizens marched in protest of the raids--an unprecedented event in Canada.

On Febrary 16, in response to the raids, the Rev. Brent Hawkes, pastor of MCC-Toronto, began a fast, and vowed at a press conference to remain on a hunger strike, "Till the Lord calls me home," unless the Provincial Governor of Ontario launched an independent inquiry into the police raids.

Hawkes said it was up to the courts to decide the legality of the charges made during the raids, but that an independent inquiry should look at "other issues:" who ordered the raids, what the priorities of the police department are, and whether excessive force was used.

Rev. Hawkes moved into the local Metropolitan Community Church, and used one room in the Church while he conducted his hunger strike.

Through long weeks, he continued his fasting and prayer vigil. Although the Toronto Metro Council, by 11-9, voted early in March to request the Attorney General to investigate police conduct, the Attorney General refused, as did the city Human Relations Commission later on. Rev. Hawkes continued his fast.

The battle, however, was not over. On Macrh 12, in response to Rev.Hawkes' fast and the prayers of MCC people all over the world, the Metro Council voted, by an unprecedented 23-0, to conduct its own inquiry.

However, the city did not name anyone to hold the hearing into the police actions against the gay community. So, the fast continued. Rev. Hawkes was interviewed on national Canadian television four times. Newspapers editorialized both for and against the fast. At one event, the local Roman Catholic Cardinal, Emmett Cardinal Carter, the Archbishop of Toronto, became involved in the controversy. He addressed the annual police communion breakfast, and told a series of anti-gay jokes. When the speech was reported in the press, there was a strong reaction from Rev. Hawkes and the gay community. The Cardinal then released as statement through his Press Secretary that, "he regrets any misunderstanding or insult" that resulted from his speech.

The ordeal of his fast finally ended for Rev. Hawkes when the Metro Council asked Dr. Daniel Hill, advisor to the Mayor's committee on community and race relations, "to look into the disagreements between the police and the gay community." He was also asked to report publicly on ways to improve relations.

Although the motion makes no reference to the bathhouse raids or to the Attorney General, Rev. Hawkes expressed satisfaction with the decision to appoint Dr. Hill to conduct the inquiry.

Immediately after the decision of the Metro Council, Rev. Hawkes went outside City Hall and, with other supporters joined hands in a circle, and received communion from the Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry, Moderator of the UFMCC.

The Rev. Mr. Hawkes stated that he had achieved his aims, and could eat with a clear conscience again.

"I started my hunger strike with communion; it's only right that I end it with communion," Mr. Hawkes said. He weighed 180 pounds when he began his fast, and had lost 33 pounds.

When asked how he replied to questions of whether he had given up in his resolve, Rev. Hawkes replied that he had achieved his aims in essence. "I'm not as strong in demanding an inquiry as some people are."

He said that Dr. Hill's study would be an impartial, independent inquiry. "I was not striking for the investigation to have powers under the public inquiry act," he stated. ●

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Our New MCC Clergy

Part 2

By Steven D. Preston
With Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson

In August of 1980, the Ministerial Credentials and Affairs Committee approved the licensing of 21 new UFMCC ministers. We conclude our introduction to who they are, where they are and what they are doing in this article (Part 1 was in the January/February issue).

REV. JOSE A. PARETS, age 40, is Worship Coordinator at Iglesia de la Comunidad Metropolitana Hispana, in Long Island City, New York. He has previously worked as a bartender at the Statler Hotel in New York City, and has also been on staff of the Alpha and Omega MCC, Brooklyn. Before coming to MCC, his religious experience was in Baptist churches.

Rev. Parets reports that his ministry in the Hispana church includes promoting the growth of the church through continual spiritual renewal and revival. He is involved in the church's Bible Training School, which seeks to teach Bible and Christian doctrine for the strengthening of the church's members, and to equip the members for Christian work and evangelism.

Rev. Parets is also involved in the Cuban Refugee Program locally, including supporting the two refugees who are living in his apartment. He reports that one of these refugees, formerly involved in voodoo and a spiritualist religion, has accepted Christ and become active in the church. Rev. Parets is also active in other aspects of community life.

Rev. Parets reports that "It has been a great honor . . . to become a licensed minister of UFMCC, although I am the same person as I was before." He feels that his licensing as clergy is an affirmation and recognition of his call to the ministry by Jesus Christ. He reports that after some problems in having new methods and liturgy accepted in his community, "thanks to the work of the Holy Spirit, everything is working out for the edification and growth of the church . . . . we have become a loving caring family . . . ." He feels that he has been "accepted by the people for what I am: a servant of God, trying to minister to the best of my ability, using the gifts God has given me."

REV. BRUCE HUGHES, age 28, is Co-Pastor of MCC Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His previous positions include the UFMCC offices, MCC Pomona, and MCC San Bernardino (both churches in California). He reports his religious background as being Roman Catholic, Methodist, and Christian/Ecumenical.

Rev. Hughes co-pastors with his spouse, the Rev. Frank Crouch. Rev. Hughes reports that since licensure, he has been involved in a number of different ministries. He has served as UFMCC representative with Cuban refugees at Ft. Indiantown Gap, about 100 miles from Philadelphia, traveling there six and seven days a week.

At the same time, he was involved in establishing the Philadelphia Gay and Lesbian Cuban Relief Task Force, to provide resources for the resettlement effort, and in the Philadelphia church's Project Judea (since adopted by the Mid-Atlantic District). He also founded the First State MCC in Delaware, and has been its Worship Coordinator since October of 1980, as well as establishing a Parish Extension of the Philadelphia church in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and being instrumental in founding the Lancaster, Pennsylvania MCC (another Parish Outreach of the Philadelphia church).

Rev. Hughes reports little change in his perception of himself as part of the UFMCC since his licensure, except in increased feelings of isolation, as a part of the "being set apart" as clergy. He feels that some of that feeling may also be due to his relocation from the west coast to the east coast of the United States, and the leaving of familiar activities and people. But he also reports that "removing the stripe (at long last!) from my collar has not perceptibly changed me, my ministry, my theology or my concern for spreading the Good News. It sure makes it easier to get into prisons, hospitals, and parking spaces, though!"

REV. ALICE "DEE" LAMB, age 42, is staff minister at MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, Texas. Before coming to the UFMCC, her religious experience was in the Methodist Church, and her work experience included duties as a Supervisor at Doctor's Hospital in Houston.

Rev. Lamb reports that, as a staff minister at MCCR, her ministries include pastoral counseling, visitation, preaching, consecration of communion, and related areas of inreach and outreach. She also is the Director of the Parish Family Ministry, known as "Covenant Families," which seeks to reach more people, and to aid each person in the development of

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deeper spiritual, relational and personal growth. She is involved in community outreach within the local hispanic neighborhood, in the gay community, and in the larger Houston/Harris County area.

Rev. Lamb is directly responsible for the Exhorter program in MCCR, is the Moderator of the Houston Cuban Relief Program (now in phase II), and also assists in various ways within the South Central District. She reports that she also does educational work in all of the areas of ministry in which she is involved.

Rev. Lamb reports three problem areas for her in ministry: "Learning to better budget my time, set priorities and have time for my mate and children; dealing with the amount of time, energy, resources, etc. directed towards secondary issues within our Fellowship, when we should be proclaiming the Good News on which UFMCC is founded; and differences in others' perceptions and my own perception of myself: greater expectations, some realistic and some not, necessitating continuing reflection, prayer and growth." But, in spite of problems, Rev. Lamb reports fulfillment in her ministry, and says "I praise God for the opportunity given me to be able to serve and share within UFMCC. To see, feel and share in others' growth in the saving grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, as I too continue to grow, is most rewarding."

REV. BRUCE M. CALDER, age 47, is Interim Pastor of MCC Adelaide, South Australia. His religious background is Presbyterian, and his previous work experience includes staff positions at MCC Melbourne and MCC Perth, in Australia, and MCC Auckland, in New Zealand.

Rev. Calder reports that his ministry in Adelaide includes preaching, teaching and counseling. He also teaches a course of lectures and discussions on Bible, theology and church history for prospective priests and brothers of the Good Samaritan Church of Truth. He reports that this is a new church in Adelaide that has established a halfway house for young men who have no home or resources.

Rev. Calder writes that "I was an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, and when I was formally licensed by MCC, I breathed a sigh of relief, as I could now officially call myself "Rev." again, after the period as an Exhorter. It didn't really make much difference, as I continued to think of myself as "Rev.", and the congregation in Adelaide had first met me in March 1979, as a minister. This official recognition has meant that I have been able to approach other ministers more easily, as a minister."

REV. JOSE CRUZ, age 27, is a staff minister at Christ MCC, Miami, Florida, and is Worship Coordinator of Iglesia de la Comunidad Metropolitana Cristo Rey, a feasibility group in Miami. He has lived in Puerto Rico, and has been associated with the Hispana church in New York. His religious background includes the Roman Catholic Church, and the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Rev. Cruz reports that he has been working with the Cuban refugees, first in New York, then in Fort Chafee, Arkansas, and most recently in Miami. He seeks to help them in their adjustment to the American society, and in relocating outside Florida when they request to move. Since November, 1980, he has also been involved in starting the feasibility group in Miami, and in providing counseling to those hispanic men and women who request counseling assistance.

Rev. Cruz feels even more commited to the ministry to which he has been called than ever before, since his licensure. He reports that he and his spouse, Elvin, have been through difficult times, and feels that he made the right choice in seeking licensure. He states: "I had some problems adjusting to the expectations that people place on a minister, especially in the hispanic community. Others seem to see me a little different than before, since I have noticed they are more careful in choosing their words around me. Things like that have made me more perceptive of other people's attitudes toward me as a minister."

REV. SYLVIA PENNINGTON, age 40, is Worship Coordinator of a feasibility group in Hawthorne, California. She reports her religious experience before coming to the UFMCC as both Assembly of God and the Foursquare Church. She has held staff positions at MCC Santa Barbara and MCC in the Valley, both in California. Her most recent MCC position was as a staff minister at MCC Beach Cities, Santa Monica, California.

Rev. Pennington reported that while at MCC Beach Cities, she co-pastored the church's new outreach in the South Bay area south of Santa Monica. As such, she arranged the morning worship format, and preached or consecrated communion (on alternate Sundays). She also reported being heavily involved in special activities throughout the week (Bible study; Women's rap; a home prayer meeting; community leadership meetings; staff meetings; Exhorter training; and monthly Exhorter retreat and seminar/workshop sessions). She feels that her major calling is to develop and train ministers, and states that at MCC Beach Cities there were 8 ministers in training. She was also involved in a counseling ministry in that church, as well as being a fulltime student. She comments: "I keep up a hectic pace–prayer is an energizing factor."

Rev. Pennington feels that the only difference in perception about her as a licensed minister is with those who see her as a "new" minister. She says: "My license is new--my ministry is not. Except for planning worship services, which I am doing, I'm not really doing too much differently than I did before." She concludes by saying: "The people in the Exhorter program provide me with a deeply spiritual and totally committed Christian support group. I'm surrounded with abundant love and unbelievable affirmation."

REV. A. EDWARD PAUL, age 34, is the Worship Coordinator at MCC Shreveport/Bossier City, Louisiana. Prior to entering the ministry of the UFMCC, Rev. Paul worked as a hairdresser. He has held positions at MCC Pensacola and MCC Jacksonville, both in Florida, and most recently at MCC Austin, Texas. His religious background before coming to UFMCC was the Church of Christ.

While at the Austin church, Rev. Paul served as the Assistant Pastor. His duties included pastoral counseling, and working heavily in the areas of inreach and outreach. He was active in on-going bar ministry, and was involved in community relations at the Austin church.

Rev. Paul reports that he feels good in general about his ministry since his formal licensing in the Fellowship. He states: "I'm just trying now to understand where and what type my ministry may be."

REV. JON DI MARIA-KUIPER, age 38, has recently become Worship Coordinator at MCC Columbia, Missouri, following service as Worship Coordinator at MCC Worcester, Massachusetts. A native of the Netherlands, he came to the UFMCC after ten years in the ministry of the Reformed Church in America. Besides

the Worcester church, he has served on staff at Alpha and Omega MCC in Brooklyn, and at Good News MCC in Albany, both in New York State.

Rev. Kuiper reports that while at the Worcester church, he was involved in an active bar ministry in the two local bsrs, where he often found himself conducting counseling sessions–more so than at the church. He also was involved in an intensive study of sign language, and had begun to employ it during parts of the services in Worcester. (This is, he states, the eighth language that he has studied.)

Rev. Kuiper reports deep involvement in community affairs while in Worcester. Although the church's application for membership in the County Ecumenical Council had failed, the struggle over that issue prompted requests from several local churches, and from the Council itself, for seminars on human sexuality and sessions on the unique ministry of MCC. He had also served as a counseling resource for the County Social Service Department, and had led staff seminars in various Mental Health Clinics in the county.

Rev. Kuiper reports that since his formal licensing in the Fellowship, he has become more keenly aware of his call from God to the ministry. He says: "I had often questioned God's motives and plan for me as I ministered in a mainline denomination. I now see the hand of God, which moved me through a valuable experience of ten years in the Dutch Reformed Church in preparation for my ministry as an openly gay pastor. The years behind me are now no longer considered a waste, but a tremendous experience which helped me to become the person God intended me to be."

There are two problems which Rev. Kuiper feels in relation to his licensure. "My problems as I perceive them now, deal with enthusiasm and patience. Too often I find myself enthused and running ahead, realizing that others are not able to keep up. God is finally allowing me (or perhaps I am allowing myself) to listen to God and learn to be more patient. Nurture is a slow, but steady, process. I see that our people are starving, but do not know how to feed themselves or be fed. Too many are scared to come to grips with a God who loves. I underestimated the pain inflicted by those who taught them in the past that God hated them, rejected them. I had no idea how deep those wounds still are . . . And that makes me feel very inadequate at times." ●

feedback on...

PAYING THE MINISTER

I'm one of those silent readers. You know the ones. We read articles, get upset and push the article aside. We get angry at the article, but never write to express our views. For not expressing our views, we then get angry with ourselves.

I'm not angry or upset. But in the last two issues of IN UNITY have appeared articles that have hit home with me and even hit me in the face. I'm very pleased with the articles on *BurnOut* and *A Day's Pay For A Day's Work*.

For the past year I've been fighting both. Unless you've been on the road of giving yourself till there is nothing more to give (not evan a stump), then it's hard for you to understand fully and appreciate burnout.

Unless you as a professional have stood in a welfare line waiting for that $150.00 check or stood in Food Stamp lines waiting for those stamps, it's hard for you to fully understand and appreciate "FINANCIAL" needs of a Pastor (a PROFESSIONAL).

The testimonies given by the Pastors and Worship Coordinators are real. I identify with the pastor who works a 40 hour job (secular) and then spends another 35-40 doing Church work. Just how long do you think a person doing this will last? Not long, that is certain. One of the two begins to suffer (either the Church or the secular job). To the Pastor, burnout comes fast.

During our November Board of Home Missions, I presented my resignation as Worship Coordinator for a group that I started over a year earlier. When asked why I was resigning, I stated one reason was finances. I had had to get a job in order to survive. I had sold all of my personal items to survive. I did this so I could give my time to the church and not work a secular job. My Deacon found out about this and was furious with me.

When I got my job, things got worse. I guess the group felt because I was working they didn't have to give as much. Through repeated education their pattern worsened. Finally I had to take the job as my only job.

The BOHM (some members) put me down, saying that I was only interested in money. This is far from the truth. I have given of myself many times over. Thru sickness and health I gave to the Church and they just kept expecting more and more for less and less.

There has to be a time when enough is enough. There has to be a time when it is okay to say "No" to a group and let them know it is time to get off their (whatever) and get about the work we are given to do. And part of that work is to provide for their spiritual leader. For without a leader there may not be a group. The two go hand in hand.

I had suggested that our District help Worship Coordinators of Study Groups (where that went I don't know). Our BOHM's strive to open new works but fail to ask how that person is going to survive till that group is able to pay a living wage (whatever that is). I firmly believe that beginning is a priority but along side that is providing for that woman or man till the group becomes a Mission.

(Why only to mission status? Before a group can become a Mission, they must prove financial stability. This stability also includes paying their Pastor/Worship Coordinator.)

I feel that through these two articles the seeds were planted. If we are to continue at 45.5% of our Ministers making under $6,000, then we will do nothing. If we want that figure to become lower we will do something either on a Fellowship or District level. Anything is better than nothing, and anything is a beginning and a showing that there is concern.

Which will it be: Worship Coordinators who feel (1) self worth or (2) failure? The choice is yours to make.

Rev. Clifford Turpin
Newport News, VA

Inclusive Language:

The Final Report

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article is extracted from the Final Report issued by the Elders' Task Force on Inclusive Language. It presents an overview of the cover letter, the Introduction and Preface to the Report, and the 15 main recommendations of the Task Force (some examples used to illustrate recommendations in the Report are deleted here in the interests of space). The Proposed Statement of Faith -- incorporating inclusive language -- is included in full; proposed changes from current wording are in italic type. Copies of the full Report are included in the Pre-conference packets for General Conference.

Report of
INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE TASK FORCE

The Elders' Task Force On Inclusive Language was called into being at the June 1979 meeting of the Board of Elders. The establishment of the Task Force was presented to the 9th General Conference in the Elders' white paper and was approved by that conference.

The Task Force began work after the Los Angeles General Conference, over the phones and through the mail. Following the grass-roots model, input was requested from churches, districts, commissions, etcetera. We met in Washington D.C. from 21st to 25th July 1980 to draft our initial report. That report was circulated in October 1980 throughout the Fellowship for feedback. The various suggestions for revision were considered and this final report was drawn up at a meeting of the Task Force in Detroit in March of 1981. This report is being circulated for study and feedback in preparation for the General Conference in Houston.

The report will be voted on in two sections:

Section I: Recommendations 1 to 14 will require majority support for adoption as UFMCC's recommendations. (Please remember you are not voting to approve the examples. They are provided only in an attempt to clarify the recommendations.

Section II: The recommended Bylaw changes require a 2/3 vote for adoption.

Thank you for your suggestions and support.

Reverend Brent Hawkes, Chairperson

Please send all responses to:

MCC Toronto
730 Bathurst Street
Toronto, Ontario M5S-2R4

INTRODUCTION TO GUIDELINES

The Inclusive Language Task Force was created to deal with the issue of language. Language, however, is not so simple a matter as it might first appear. How we speak about something not only describes the experience, but often shapes and creates it. The power and significance of language, words, the word, was clearly understood by the authors of Scripture who identified the act of creation with God's Word, God's speaking. The imagery of God's interaction with humanity is consistently expressed in terms of God's Word or speaking. The early prohibition against uttering God's name was a recognition of the power that a name or word holds. Indeed God's delegating to humanity the authority to name the birds and animals was an act of empowerment. Thus, when we deal with language in general, and God language in particular, we are venturing into an area of the deepest significance, and it is important that we proceed with care and with caution.

At the same time, both the Biblical tradition and the history of the faith community reveal that the one constant in God language is that of change. And how could it be otherwise? For it is a living God whom we worship and respond to. Both as individuals and as communities our understanding and experience of this God grows as we grow, and growth inevitably brings change.

The Bible in its present form evolved over a period of many centuries. Beginning as stories of faith passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation, these stories were eventually written down and added to. Different generations of faith communities shaped, edited, and retold these stories in light of their own understanding and experience of God. Still other communities later on discussed and debated which stories and which versions would be included as scripture and which would not. (The fact that even today, the Jews, the catholics, and the protestants all have slightly different scriptures vividly demonstrates that different perspectives have led communities to different determinations of God's Word.)

It is not surprising then, that we, in our age, following the tradition of our forebears in the faith, are retelling and reshaping the great stories of faith in light of our own experience and our own understanding of that same living God.

Such a restatement is a particular hallmark of any prophetic age, when God calls us into wider understandings of old truths and relationships in light of changing events and experience. It was, after all, the reformulation of the faith by the prophets in response to the destruction of Israel that renewed that faith. It was the restatement of the law in the life and teachings of Jesus that fulfilled that law. It was the re-interpretation of who is the faith community by Paul that laid the foundation for an inclusive and universal church.

Any such change is also accompanied by tremendous resistance and hostility by those who seek to be loyal to the old formulations. Religious institutions and leaders in particular are susceptible to this form of blindness. Jesus' complaint that the people who loudly proclaim their veneration of the prophets of old are the same people who are stoning the prophets in their midst, is no less a problem in our own age.

If we can be certain that God is asking each of us to change in our understanding, we can be less certain as to the direction of that change. Is a new direction the leading of a living God or

is it a turning away from the path that God has set before us? This, of course, is always the crucial question. For in our struggle together as a community, the debate is never between those who say we should follow the Word of God and those who say we should not - how easy that would be; but rather between those who have differing understandings of what in fact is God's Word for us. Since we know that our knowledge and our prophecy is imperfect, we cannot pretend that any of our beliefs, no matter how deeply held, are final or error-free formulations. How then do we approach change? It seems that we must always ask the same question. Does the intended change lead to a richer, deeper, more faithful understanding and experience of the God we have met in our own lives as well as in the testimony of the communities of faith throughout the ages, or does it lead to some diminished or self-serving view? This question does not always yield an immediate answer, but at least it delivers us from the meaningless spectacle of shouting Bible verses at one another and pretending that such a futile exercise is true reflection and examination.

In approaching the question of inclusive language, we need to consider the nature of the change that would take place. For what is being proposed is not merely a cosmetic change to politically mollify vociferous factions in our midst, but rather a different way of thinking, understanding, and speaking about God. Is that way a richer, deeper, more faithful one, or a diminished and self-serving one?

The members of the Inclusive Language Task Force, though representing diverse cultural and theological perspectives, are united in believing the guidelines here presented will enrich rather than diminish our faith experience. For the changes that these guidelines represent are in the interest of enlarging and expaiding our understanding and experience of God. By no longer identifying God with words or concepts primarily or exclusively associated with one gender, one race, one group, we more faithfully witness to the nature of a God who is not limited to one gender, one race, or one group.

The fact that such a change is neither familiar nor comfortable for many of us does not mean that we need not expend the effort. Allowing our lives to be transformed by the power of God often involves our submitting to changes that we initially resist. The fact that such a change requires our learning to restate the traditional formulations of our faith in light of God's present Word is no less than other communities of faith have had to do before us. Indeed, to be part of such an emerging restatement of God's Word is not a burden, but a sacred privilege.

PREAMBLE

The reason we need to find and use inclusive language in our church life has been widely misunderstood. Inclusive language has often been urged upon congregations on grounds that the use of traditional, non-inclusive language upsets and angers some who then avoid the church. As Christians we need to be concerned about the feelings of others; however, if the only reason we use inclusive language is that it keeps some people from getting upset, then what of those who find the use of inclusive language disturbing because of its unfamiliarity? The principle which guides the life and practice of the church cannot be 'what do most people find comfortable,' but rather, 'what is God's will and purpose.' The reason we need to use inclusive language is not because we want to keep a particular group happy, but because it is necessary to promote justice, reconciliation and love, the agenda to which we Christians have been called.

Because of human sin, we live in a world of division and oppression. Groups which have traditionally exercised control over other groups inevitably and often unconsciously seek to preserve that superior status by denying the same access to power and privilege to others that they themselves enjoy. Such denial may be blatant in the form of discriminatory laws or customs, or it may be hidden but even more potent in the form of oppressive concepts or language. The insidious nature of language which serves to emphasize one group as the norm or standard is that it reinforces that group's primacy and importance every time we think or speak, thus, it becomes automatic or 'natural' to ascribe greater weight to that group. Justice, reconciliation and love demand that we overcome oppression wherever it exists, and we cannot exclude the oppressive structures of our language from this task.

The use of inclusive language does more than overcome a barrier to equal access. It frees us to apprehend and convey the wider truth. Paul urges the Corinthians to widen their hearts that they might fully experience the gospel (II Cor. 6:13). In the same spirit, he might urge us to widen our understanding so that we might better grasp the richness and fullness of God as well as of our own humanity. It is our openness to move beyond comfortable and familiar images that enables us to grow in our relationship with God. The importance of inclusive language is that it serves to liberate everyone.

SECTION I

1. What is inclusiveness?

Inclusiveness is an attitude or stance of mutuality and openness towards others that recognizes everyone's right of equal access to the experience and realization of wholeness, and it is a commitment to remove barriers between individuals and among communities that deny such access.

2. What is inclusive language?

Inclusive language reflects an attitude or stance of mutuality and openness towards others that recognizes everyone's right of equal access to the experiences and realization of wholeness.

Inclusive language reflects a sensitivity to overcoming barriers that exist between individuals and among communities in such areas as gender, race, class, age, physical differences, nationality, theological beliefs, culture and lifestyle.

3. Guidelines for inclusive language regarding gender.

a. References to people.

i) Use nongendered terms or inclusive gendered terms when referring to all sexes.

(eg. Instead of 'man' or 'mankind,' use 'human,' 'humanity,' 'humankind,' 'people,' 'all,' 'men and

continued

women,' 'female and male.' Do not use 'brothers in Christ' or 'sons of God' or 'brotherhood,' but 'Christians,' 'friends,' 'community,' 'people of God,' 'children of God' or 'sisters and brothers.')

ii) Pronouns should not be of a single gender when referring to all sexes.

(eg. Instead of "A Christian should read his Bible daily" use "Christians should read their Bibles daily" (plural) - "A Christian should read his or her Bible daily" (both sexes) - "A Christian should read the Bible daily" (drop the pronoun) - "The Bible should be read by Christians" (passive voice).

iii) Terms for occupations and roles should not refer to one gender.

(eg. Do not add diminutives of 'ess' or 'ette,' as in 'priestess.' It is a diminutive and demeaning to refer to women or gay men as 'girls.' Do not use 'spokesman' or 'chairman,' but 'chairperson' or 'chair.' Do not use 'man the booth' but 'staff the booth.' Forms of address should not call attention to sex, race or nationality, but to the role: not 'women-' or 'gay-' or 'Hispanic-' minister, but 'minister.')

b. Inclusive language for God.

i) Use nongendered or inclusive gendered terms for God wherever such improvements do not alter the fundamental meaning. If a gendered term is necessary or desirable, terms of the other gender should also be used for balance.

(Examples of nongendered terms for God: Creator, Maker, Sovereign, Holy One, Spirit, Lover, Ruler, Guide, Shepherd, Rock, Source of Life, Yahweh, the Almighty, Parent, Friend, Most High.)

ii) Balance male images for God with female images.

(eg. Nurturer, the Breasted One, Mother, Midwife, Mother Eagle or Hen.)

iii) Where possible, replace pronouns with nongendered nouns or use balanced gendered pronouns or words such as 'who,' 'whom,' 'one' and 'Godself.'

c. Inclusive language for Jesus the Christ.

The historical person, Jesus, was male. "The historical fact that Jesus was male affirms not that God chose to become incarnate with masculine characteristics, but that Jesus was truly human as well as truly divine. And because Jesus incorporates the humanity of both men and women, it is appropriate"* . . .to emphasize the full humanity by minimizing the use of male pronouns. (*page 21, *All May Be One: A guide to Inclusive Church Language*, The Task Force on Women, Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, Minneapolis, Minnesota 1979.)

d. The task force recommends as options the use of direct address, adjectives and verbs to replace nouns or pronouns in dealing with inclusive language, carefully considering whether meaning or purpose would be adversely changed.

(eg. Change "He's got the whole world in His hands" to "You've got the whole world in Your hands.")

4. Guidelines for inclusive language regarding race.

If we are indeed going to be an inclusive church, we must acknowledge that we are the products of our past. Incorporated within our Christian religious heritage is a long history of racism (conscious or unconscious). Racism, whether conscious or unconscious, is destructive and must be overcome in order for us to be whole in our Christian faith. So, in keeping with our guideline for inclusivity, we strongly recommend the elimination of racist language, imagery and symbols in references to people, God, Jesus Christ, scripture, hymns, songs, liturgy and contemporary language.

(eg. We recommend not using language which suggests that white is the preferred color, such as "wash me white as snow." Instead, use "pure as hope" or "free of sin." Instead of "pearly white gates" use "heavenly gates" and instead of "robes of pure white" use "spotless robes." We discourage the exclusive use of dark colors in liturgical attire to indicate death or mourning and we discourage the exclusive use of white to indicate joy or life. The best solution is to show that on the authority of the Bible black and darkness can be positive symbols – symbols of the divine and of goodness.)

The task force had a problem dealing with the separation of the issues of pigmentation (white, black) and illumination (light, dark). Because of its racism, society has so strongly interwoven the two. In a technical and a theological sense they are indeed separate issues whereas, in their practical application, they are often combined. We need to be especially mindful of how we use terms of lightness and darkness.

5. The relation of inclusive language to the life and worship of the church.

The above guidelines should be applied when reading translations of scripture, in hymns, songs and liturgy, and in contemporary language.

6. We recommend that the guidelines of this commission be similarly developed for each of the languages which UFMCC congregations speak.

7. The task force recommends that inclusive language be introduced in membership classes of local congregations as an area of discussion and education.

8. The task force recommends that these guidelines be applied at all levels of the life of UFMCC, both in written, visual and spoken form, on the local, national and international levels.

9. The task force recommends that at all UFMCC functions at the local, national and international level, all participants, to include outside guests, be informed of these guidelines.

10. The task force recommends that the UFMCC Department of Christian Education revise and develop materials using these guidelines, including production of a packet and study guide for use in studying inclusive language.

11. The task force recommends that the UFMCC commission a body to provide us with an inclusive scripture that incorporates these guidelines. In the meantime, great care should be taken in applying these guidelines to scripture.

12. The task force recommends to the Ministerial Credentials and Affairs Committee that in evaluating ministers it include an opportunity for the candidates to demonstrate their readiness to use inclusive language.

13. The task force recommends that these guidelines be applied to the work of the Hymnody Committee.

14. The task force recommends that UFMCC use the name of the month and day in giving dates, since order varies among countries when only numerals are used (eg. 6/2/80 can be June 2 or February 6). Also, seasonal references should be eliminated, and months used instead (eg. not 'Fall Session' but 'September Session').

SECTION II

15. Recommendations for Statement of Faith.

UFMCC Bylaws, Article III: Doctrine, Sacraments and Rites.

A. Doctrine: Christianity is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and is the religion set forth in the Scriptures. *Jesus Christ is foretold in the Old Testament, presented in the New Testament, and proclaimed by the Christian Church in every age and in every land.*

Founded in the interest of offering a church home to all who confess and believe, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches moves in the mainstream of Christianity.

Our faith is based upon the principles outlined in the historic creeds: Apostles' and Nicene.

We believe:

1. *In one triune God, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, of one substance and of three persons: God - our Parent-Creator; Jesus - begotten of God, God in flesh, human; and the Holy Spirit - God as our sustainer.*

2. That the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, showing forth God to every person through the law and the prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus Christ.

3. That Jesus . . . the Christ . . .historically recorded as living some 2,000 years before this writing, *is God incarnate, of human birth, fully God and fully human, and that by being one with the will of God*, Jesus has demonstrated once and forever that all people are likewise Children of God, being spiritually made in God's image.

4. That the Holy Spirit is God making known God's love and interest to all people. The Holy Spirit is God, available to and working through all who are willing to place their welfare in God's keeping.

5. Every person is justified by Grace to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

6. We are saved from loneliness, despair and degradation through God's gift of grace, as was declared by our *Saviour*. Such grace is not earned, but is a pure gift from a God of pure love. We further commend the *community* of the faithful to a life of prayer; to seek genuine forgiveness for unkind, thoughtless and unloving acts; and to a committed life of Christian service.

7. The Church serves to bring all people to God through Christ. To this end, it shall arrange for regular services of worship, prayer, interpretation of the Scriptures, and edification through the teaching and preaching of the Word.

B. Sacraments: This church embraces two holy Sacraments:

1. Baptism by water and the Spirit, as recorded in the Scriptures, shall be a sign of the dedication of each life to God and God's service. Through the words and acts of this sacrament, the recipient is identified as God's own Child.

2. Holy Communion is the partaking of blessed bread and wine in accordance with *the words of Jesus:* "This is my body . . . this is my blood." (Matthew 26:26-28)

All who believe, confess and repent and seek God's love through Christ, after examining their consciences, may freely participate in the communal meal, signifying their desire to be received into *community with Jesus Christ,* to be saved by *Jesus Christ's* sacrifice, to participate in *Jesus Christ's* resurrection, and to commit their lives anew to *the* service *of Jesus Christ.* ●

LAY PAGE

A LAYPERSON VISITS A CLERGY CONFERENCE

by Dick Follett

Did you ever wonder what happens at a UFMCC International Clergy Conference? As a UFMCC lay person, I recently had the opportunity to attend the International Clergy Conference in Detroit (March 23-26) to speak about Samaritan Theological Institute. What I found was in many ways not what I expected. Let me list for you some of my observations.

1. Although we have long said in this Fellowship that there is really no difference between clergy and laity-since we believe firmly in the ministry of all believers–there is still, for many of us, a tendency to work from an "Us/Them" mentality. Well, folks, "they" (clergy) have many of the same strengths and the same weaknesses "we" (laity) have. I know that's not very profound, stated right out like that in simple terms, but it is important as the first observation: clergy members are first of all human beings, and as such share common frustrations, fears, needs and joys with the rest of us.

One of the biggest surprises I had was in my discovery of how many clergy folk are shy. Yes, that's right–shy. (And you thought the pastor didn't speak to you because she/he didn't like you!) While some clergy are well able to stand in front of quite large congregations with apparent ease (though sometimes with knees shaking behind the pulpit), some clergy members, as fully human beings, do not meet people very well on a one to one basis. Some have real difficulties in simply meeting new people. Why, then, you ask, would they want to be members of the clergy? Sometimes God calls reluctant clergy. (Remember Moses and his series of excuses to God of why he could not be the Israelites' leader?) Sometimes a clergy member's effectiveness is great in preaching, administration, and other areas where personal shyness is not a handicap. Sometimes God calls people through our weaknesses in order to work through them and to reveal our full humanity to others. God can use various talents and God can help us get beyond various perceived weaknesses. Besides, God can well send a shy clergy person to a friendly congregation–let the congregation support its clergy.

I came away from this Clergy Conference with a tremendous admiration for those clergy members who put their lives on the line everytime they are forced to overcome their personal shyness, their personal reluctance to reach out to others. Truly, it is the Spirit of God that enables them to minister.

2. Clergy members often bring with them the baggage of their past–as do the rest of us–and sometimes have great difficulties with new knowledge that is upsetting to their developed thinking. In this regard, they are just like many of us who retreat from having to change our minds, who back away from new insights because we have just become comfortable with what we now know. But think how much more difficult it must be, at times, for a clergy member to change her/his mind–especially if the sermon last Sunday was a careful explanation of the opposite point of view and was given in front of a full sanctuary. At this point, the clergy member will have publicly expressed a position which she/he will now have to change publicly. That is, for anyone, difficult; it may be even more difficult for clergy folk.

3. Clergy members need to dialog among themselves just as much as the rest of us in the UFMCC. There is a *real* need for caucuses of like-minded clergy; there is also a need for meetings-of-the-whole to express differences of opinion, to exchange views, to challenge thought patterns. There is a distinct need to sit together in open support of each other, even when the conversation may show profound differences in opinion–both theological and personal.

Unfortunately, clergy members are too often limited in their opportunities for such open dialog. Conferences are too short (and too far between) for full dialog. In their own congregations, laity will too often defer to clergy opinions rather than challenge them openly in study groups, prayer meetings, or classes. Laity will often express disagreements with their clergy to other laity, but will not as often take their disagreements to the clergy person directly. And too often, when the clergy member speaks in a group her/his word is taken as definitive, and discussion (which could be beneficial for the laity and especially beneficial for the clergy member) ends. How does this, then, allow the clergy member to grow in belief also? No human being should be expected to be so giving all the time.

4. There may be an unstated arrogance among clergy and laity behind statements such as "I've heard that before" or "I've said that before" – and both groups need carefully to examine such arrogance, to purge it and to free ourselves from its destructive implications. We must remember that the Good News has been

Call for
Lay Writers/Artists/Poets/
Etc.

IN UNITY has reestablished a LAY PAGE as a regular feature. Our lay people must maintain this page. Your contributions (ranging from a short meditation to a full page article) should be sent to:

Dr. Richard J. Follett
Lay Page Editor
c/o Samaritan Theological Institute
5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 104
Los Angeles, California 90029

Lay concerns, lay insights, lay projects, lay involvement, etc.--all should be included in IN UNITY. The diversity of our lay people can be shown clearly through our mutual sharing of information on this *page. Please contribute soon.*

told millions of times, but each telling is new–and each telling may be the first time someone actually hears the story. Just because the words have been *spoken* doesn't mean they have been *understood*. Often the opposite is true: if we do not understand spoken words the first time, when they are spoken again our minds will tend to discount that information–since we think we have heard it before. In reality, we may not have understood it before and we block ourselves from understanding it now.

When we are tempted to say "I've heard that before" or "I've said that before," we would do well to stop and think what that means, think what that does to the full humanity of the person we're talking with (or about), think what love that may negate.

5. Finally, I came away from the International Clergy Conference confident in the ability of our UFMCC clergy members to provide sound leadership for this Fellowship. More dialog is needed to clear up some pressing issues, but I believe we can find ways to have that dialog–the conference itself was part of that. I was deeply impressed with the multitude of talents and insights in the group that met in Detroit. We have, within our Fellowship clergy, abundant talent to do the work of the Living God–just as we have abundant talent among our laity. We need now, I think, to focus on the positive aspects of our clergy members, to support them in our love and prayers–as well as in our dialog and criticism–and to enhance their ministerial leadership through our willing offerings of our time, our abilities, and our money. None of our clergy should have to be burdened with financial problems–and it is our congregational responsibility to free them from those burdens. Which one of us could remain cheerful in sermon preparation when we weren't sure we'd have an apartment when the rent came due? Many of our clergy still live under that negative financial pressure; we, as responsible lay members of UFMCC, must free our leaders to be the whole persons God has called them to be. We in the UFMCC have everything we need to do God's work; we must be about that work seriously. ●

Stringer:

n. 1. One who strings [as, a stringer of pearls]. 2. A horizontal timber connecting upright posts in a frame. *3. A newsperson employed on a free-lance basis, often in out-of-town or 'foreign' locations.*

Do you long to see your words, your thoughts, in print? Would you like to see your name as the byline for articles, on a regular basis? Do you have a particular area of expertise which you would like to use to the benefit of God's people around the world?

You could be a Stringer! IN UNITY Magazine would like to establish a network of free-lance writers who would be available for occasional writing assignments on topics of interest to our readers, local and regional news events, or issues of current concern.

Although IN UNITY cannot pay contributors at this time, you would have the satisfaction of seeing your byline in the magazine, of sharing your thoughts with the UFMCC family, and of providing useful knowledge and expertise for our readers. (Payment will be in complimentary copies of the issues in which your byline appears.)

If you would like to apply to be a stringer for IN UNITY Magazine, please submit a resumé of your writing and journalistic experience, and indicate areas of expertise or special interest. If you use a pseudonym, please include your real name–which will be kept confidential. Also include tear sheets (or copies) of published writings (or sample manuscripts of unpublished work) for evaluation. Please also include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a reply. (Submitted materials or manuscripts *cannot* be returned without a SASE.)

Write to:
IN UNITY Editor
5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304
Los Angeles, CA 90029

LAY-UPS

by Jean Gralley

I'M TAKING THAT ONE
AND THAT ONE
AND HER
AND HIM---
THEY'VE BEEN WONDERFUL MINISTERS.
BUT JESUS- AREN'T YOU GOING TO TAKE ANY LAYPEOPLE?
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN, SIMON? I'M NOT LOOKING FOR CLERGY OR LAYFOLKS---
©Gralley '81
I'M JUST LOOKING FOR MINISTERS.

ANSWERED PRAYERS

REV. ROY BIRCHARD
MS. KERRY BROWN
Contributing Editors

From Disco to Catholic Church to Speech Clinic!

For many MCC groups over the years, locating a *place* for worship has provided both a test of faith and an opportunity for witness–and adventure. When we began MCC of Tidewater in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1977, the main lesbian/gay organization in town was the Unitarian-Universalist Gay Caucus. Since the UUGC was apprehensive about our potential as a competitor and unsure about just what Metropolitan Community Church *was*, we decided not to ask the Unitarian Church of Norfolk for meeting and worship space–even though in many ways it was the best location. We felt being a good neighbor in that situation meant trusting God to find us another place of worship.

At first, we met in the home of the two men who had invited me to come to Norfolk as a missionary–a small, one-story home built during World War II as temporary housing for U.S. Navy officers and their families and surrounded by "elephant ear" plants and pine trees native to that region of the Atlantic coast. On Sundays, a dozen or so of us huddled together for Eucharist and praise, entirely filling the small living room. We prayed to God for more space.

Within weeks, God provided the answer. One day, I was summoned unexpectedly to the office of a man who owned several of the gay bars and discos in Norfolk. I was more than a little nervous about what might be on his mind as I entered his office at the city's largest disco. (Resembling movie star Clint Eastwood both physically and by reputation, he inspired affection for his support of local gay liberation organizations, and a respectful awe of his size and demeanor. You didn't mess with this man!) I didn't know whether to be more impressed by the thick wad of money resting on the top of his desk, or the pistol that was holding it down! But he dismissed my fears with his first question: "What do you need?" The following Sunday, and for several months afterward, we met in that same disco–singing hymns and sharing communion a few paces from the spot where *Time* magazine had photographed Leonard Matlovich dancing, for its cover story on his coming-out.

Nevertheless, some people in town felt MCC would grow more if we could meet in a church. We approached several Protestant congregations, but none dared accommodate us–even when the ministers were sympathetic. We prayed and waited on the Lord. One day, I received an excited phone call. Our vice-moderator, on an impulse, had gone to the pastor of St. Mary's Catholic Church, the "Mother Church" of Catholicism in Norfolk and a primarily black congregation. Its priest, a white man with an Irish name, invited us to worship there. We were amazed! I had never heard of an MCC meeting in a Catholic church, but we did. The building was a lovely and shabby old white, plastered thing–well-used by generations of Catholics and right in the heart of downtown Norfolk. A new, free-standing altar and humnals in the pews (from a black Baptist denomination) were some of the modern alterations our hosts had made. (Those hymnals greatly improved our music program!)

The priest had formerly served in Northern Virginia, but when a new diocese was formed there with a new conservative Bishop, the "old" Bishop wisely transferred him to Norfolk, where he helped us (who says God has no use for church politics?) We worshipped there for several months, growing in numbers and credibility in the community. But one Sunday evening, as I was preparing to fly to California for a Fellowship committee meeting, the priest called me in. An elderly woman had complained to the Bishop in Richmond, who had sent the chancellor of the diocese down to tell the priest we had to go. And just when I was getting ready to leave town! We prayed *real* hard that night.

Two things happened. The priest put us up temporarily in the parish school next door (after all, we *were* out of the church!), and a woman in our congregation, a speech therapist, invited us to worship in her clinic. And so, on we moved. From living room to disco, from Catholic church to a psychologist's clinic–the Lord provided us with some remarkable worship settings. I left Norfolk at the end of a year; for my last service, Troy Perry came and preached. And for that special event, we *did* rent the Unitarian Church, and it wasn't long after that Good Samaritan MCC of Norfolk took up regular worship space there. (Having proved ourselves good neighbors, the UUGC gave up their apprehension about us and supported MCC moving in.)

The Lord answers prayers of all kinds in all sorts of ways–and tests us, both by the waiting and by having to adapt to the answers. We praise God, whose grace is sufficient and whose humor, I think, exceeds our own!

REV. ROY BIRCHARD

ANSWERED PRAYERS is a column of testimony to the power of prayer in the lives of the churches–and the women and men--of the UFMCC. The Contributing Editors seek accounts of answered prayer from IN UNITY's readers, and plan to publish a book of answered prayers in the future. (The names of persons in the column may be changed upon request.) Please send accounts of ANSWERED PRAYERS to: Rev. Roy Birchard, Apt. 704, 4405 West Pine, St. Louis, MO 63108; or Ms. Kerry Brown, No. 5 J, 527 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10027. (Accounts sent to IN UNITY will be forwarded.)

IN THE FELLOWSHIP

MCC-DC Minister Appointed and Honored

Thursday, February 12, Lincoln's birthday, marked an historic and joyful event for MCC Washington D.C. On that date, the Rev. Jennie Boyd Bull, Staff Minister, was sworn in as a Commissioner of the District of Columbia Human Rights Commission. Rev. Bull was appointed by Mayor Marion Barry to a term on the 15 member Commission, which is the judicial branch of District government for the enforcement of its comprehensive human rights law. The Commission hears appeals and makes the final decision on violation complaints which have not been resolved at lower administrative levels within the separately funded Human Rights Office.

When contacted by IN UNITY, Rev. Bull expressed her elation at being appointed to this important post. She saw her appointment as a recognition of MCC Washington's ministry within the community, as well as an endorsement of her own ministry. Rev. Bull stated that she plans to move slowly at first, in order to learn the mechanics of the Commission and to familiarize herself with the issues before the Commission.

Rev. Bull said that her goals as a Commissioner are to represent the gay and lesbian community of the District in the Commission's deliberations, not allowing herself to be a token appointee, and to bring a Christian witness for social justice into the thinking of the Commission. She also joins with the already-appointed gay man on the Commission in hoping to see the appointment of at least one more Commissioner from the gay and lesbian community.

When asked what emphasis she hopes to bring to the Commission, Rev. Bull responded that there are essentially three areas in her past experience which she thinks will be invaluable to her. From her work with homeless persons in the District, her involvement in efforts at neighborhood stabilization, and her experience in working with racially and sexually inclusive language, she hopes to inject an understanding and consciousness of these needs into the Commission's deliberations.

In conclusion, the Rev. Bull stated that she thought her appointment as a Human Rights Commissioner of the District of Columbia was one more evidence that MCC Washington is focusing on reaching out in service to the community.

In addition to appointing the Rev. Jennie Boyd Bull to the District of Columbia Human Rights Commission, Mayor Marion Barry of the District of Columbia also issued the following proclamation:

> Whereas, Reverend Jennie Boyd Bull has devoted a considerable portion of her time and attention to giving spiritual guidance and counseling to our Gay and Lesbian population; and
>
> Whereas, it is fitting and proper that we set aside a period in which we can honor those among us who make significant and important contributions to the life of our city;
>
> Now, therefore, I, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, do hereby proclaim Friday, February 13, 1981 as "Jennie Boyd Bull Day" in Washington, D.C., and call upon all of our residents to join with me in honoring Jennie Boyd Bull in grateful acknowledgement of the exceptionally outstanding contributions which she makes to her fellow citizens. ●

1981 W.C.E. Offering

As of May 18th, the total received in the World Church Extension Offering (including the Nigeria Van Fund) is $8,414.76 US. (This compares to about $14,000 US in the 1980 offering.)

MCC Philadelphia Seeking Building

MCC Philadelphia, at a congregational meeting April 5, 1981, voted to begin negotiations to purchase their own church building, located near the heart of downtown Philadelphia. The congregation, which has been meeting at the First Unitarian Church for the last nine years, is excited by this latest challenge.

The two story structure presently houses a food brokerage firm, and before that was the home of a mosaic tile manufacturer, so the entire building is done in differing patterns of mosaic tile. There is a mezzanine with three spacious offices, a full basement, a full second floor (again with mosaic tile floors), and a fully equipped kitchen where the church could hold its "Almost-Every-Sunday Supper Club." ●

A SPECIAL THANK YOU!

March 4, 1981

There is no way in the world that I can express the appreciation for your prayers for my son Amalio "Paco" Rivera-Viana. Someone upstairs in heaven must have heard us. This morning I got a call from my wife, Nickie, informing me of the good news: "Paco" will out-grow his oversized heart.

So, on behalf of "PACO," Nickie and myself I want to thank you all for your prayers and support during our very depressing ordeal. I want to especially thank the Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson for offering to go with Nickie to the hospital at a time when Nickie needed all the support she could get. I also want to thank Phil Gallnitz, our Office Manager for his moral support and understanding. Thank you to the Staff for your willingness to work with a very distraught father. Thanks John for understanding. Thanks Ruth for handling my calls promptly. A million Gracias *to our Lord in heaven for granting me wisdom, serenity, patience and courage to accept those things that I could not change.*

Yours in Christ,
Frank Rivera-Albert
Consultant
UFMCC Cuban Relief Program

Progress & Need at STI

Samaritan Theological Institute has been offered two large classrooms directly across the hall from its present location: one classroom will seat 30 students; the other 20. Ironically (in God's own timing), word of this lease-offer came at the precise moment STI received word that a large monthly donation was being transferred to other Fellowship funds. Even so, the Executive Committee and the Regents of STI are certain that taking the additional classroom space is the best move at this time. Seed monies are needed now more than ever before.

If you have not yet given in support of Samaritan Sunday (May, 1981), won't you write a check to Samaritan Theological Institute right now? If you have already given, could you make an additional small contribution? Please mail tax-deductible contributions to: STI, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 104, Los Angeles, CA 90029. Thank you. With God all things are possible!

MCC-WICHITA MOVES AHEAD

Rev. Bob Twar of MCC-Wichita was elected by the General Assembly of Inter-Faith Ministries to its Board of Directors. Inter-Faith Ministries of Wichita "affirms that God calls us as co-workers to participate in the creation of a society which promotes justice for all, relieves misery and reconciles the estranged." Membership is open to any congregation, denomination, other religious or community group, or individual in accord with the statement of purpose.

MCC-Wichita had joined the group only two months earlier, when the board of the four-year-old church decided it was time to join actively in the wider body of believers. The board was a little apprehensive at first, because in 1978 the religious community had been polarized by debate over Wichita's gay rights ordinance, repealed later by voters. By joining IFM, MCC-Wichita took a step toward coming out of its religious closet, and God has blessed that decision.

The congregation itself continues to grow, and added three additional deacons to the four on staff already. ●

UFMCC Cuban Relief Program UPDATE

At the present time, the UFMCC Cuban Relief Program is in the process of resettling the remainder of the Cuban Refugees that are able to leave Fort Chaffee. Thus, remaining in the camp will be the more serious criminal, mental and problem cases. There are presently other agencies and organizations that have the facilities and capabilities of handling the serious problem cases, attempting to help those that will yet be in the camp. Therefore, the remainder of the gay Cuban Refugees should be out of the camp by the end of May.

The current phase of our program is resettling the remainder of the refugees by placement in transition centers, professionally staffed, which are being funded by a Federal Grant of $370,000. Also, at this time, continued assistance is being given through a grant from the State of California for Los Angeles, to provide vocational ESL (English as a Second Language), social work and job development. This will begin the first part of May.

The next major phase of the program will begin in the fall of 1981. Consideration is being given at this time to assist and continue with resettlement of other immigrants and refugees (i.e., Haitians, Salvadorians, Armenians) if the need becomes apparent, to another agency considering granting us funding to do so. We will not know for sure about this however, until the middle of August.

The U.F.M.C.C. is *not* soliciting new sponsors at this time, since the remainder of those that are sponsorable are being taken care of and professionally handled through our centers.

We yet continue to assist with refugee problems, breakdowns and working with other resettlement agencies for those that are out of the camps. This is an ongoing program with much potential of future growth, development and outreach to give aid to other human beings in need. ●

Registration applications for General Conference 10 are available from the UFMCC Offices:

General Conference 10
UFMCC
5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304
Los Angeles, CA 90029

San Antonio Celebration

San Antonio – MCC San Antonio celebrated another milestone on February 15th, 1981, with the dedication of its newly acquired Church building.

The Reverend Elder Troy D. Perry, founder of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, officiated at the dedication service and delivered the morning and evening sermons.

It was truly a time for rejoicing and planning new directions for ministry in San Antonio. Rev. Perry reminded MCCSA that this is not an end but a new beginning, a platform from which to launch a campaign to bring many more brothers and sisters to know Christ and Christ's salvation.

The church was filled with many special guests. There were representatives from various San Antonio based groups, including Dignity/ San Antonio and many local bars, and friends including Sheriff Joe Neaves of Bexar County, in which San Antonio is located. There were also representatives from MCC Austin, MCC Dallas, MCCR in Houston, and the MCC Study Group in Lubbock, Texas.

Reverend Perry was honored at a dinner at the church on Friday, February 13, where he spoke of the direction of the UFMCC and future plans and events. Later in the evening he had a chance to take in some of the local flavor of our unique city, visiting the River Walk and La Villita.

All in all, it was an inspiring and uplifting weekend for us in the Alamo City, which gave us a new outlook and direction to do Christ's work here in San Antonio. --Deacon Jerry Kaufmann

MCC of the Sioux Empire, South Dakota

Rev. Jan Kross, Worship Coordinator, has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Sioux Empire Gay Coalition. She reports that the church is seeking a new place to meet, and plans to contact other local church bodies to request rental space. Since this will cause a large increase in the church's budget, they are planning a Collier Art Auction as a fundraiser for this purpose.

"FEMINIST WORSHIP AT MCC SAN FRANCISCO"

by The Reverend Michael England
Minister of Christian Education

MCC San Francisco recently hosted at its evening service an innovative and exciting feminist Christian worship service entitled "Exploring New Images of God." The service was coordinated by the Reverend Jane Spahr, MCC SF's Director of Pastoral Care, and women of the congregation. It was conducted by the Reverend Spahr and various women from the San Francisco religious community, including a leader of the San Francisco Council of Churches and a feminist nun from the University of San Francisco.

The service, attended by a large congregation of both women and men, took place in the sanctuary, rearranged around a central altar which featured a cluster of brightly colored candles lighted one at a time as the names and significance of leading women of the faith were read. The "sermon" was responses in a "Quaker" atmosphere from the congregation to readings from Scripture and other sources which evoked images of God–female, male and inclusive.

The service, growing from the strong current of feminist spirituality shared by the women leading, was new, challenging, exciting and sometimes strange to the assembled congregation. The congregation's response has been creative and encouraging, producing thoughtful speculation and planning for continuing growth in the feminist consciousness of MCC SF's worshipping community and ministry.

The service grew out of emerging threads of education, ministry and consciousness in the church's life. A six week course in "Feminism in MCC/Christianity" co-led by the Reverend Spahr and the Reverend Michael England produced not only a constructive response to the UFMCC Inclusive Language Task Force, but a group of women and men increasingly conscious of the need to extend the church's ministry more effectively to lesbian women in San Francisco. The women of the congregation have begun to meet on a regular basis to build a sense of community, to bring to the congregation suggestions and resources for an inclusive ministry which will be nourishing and effective for women and men.

A male member of the congregation gave an anonymous donation for an award to a woman of the San Francisco community as an affirmation of the role of women in church leadership. This award was presented, during the feminist worship, to Catherine D'Amato of the San Francisco Council of Churches, a dynamic lesbian and ecumenical leader who shared in her own songs and words at several points during the service.

MCC SF's recent Spiritual Renewal was also directed as "a special emphasis on the leadership and participation of women in our church life." The guest preacher was the Reverend Dusty Pruitt of MCC Long Beach and a Saturday workshop on "Sexuality and Spirituality" was led by Dr. Dody Donnelly, a Roman Catholic nun and instructor at Berkeley's Pacific School of Religion.

The culmination of this aspect of church life–in the recent feminist worship service–is seen as a new step in the continuing inclusion of women and men, with their individual and common needs, in the life of this Christian community and in the breadth of its ministry. ●

FIRST HISPANIC AMERICAS DISTRICT CONFERENCE

The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches has announced that the HISPANIC AMERICAS DISTRICT will have its first District Conference in Houston, Texas, on August 2nd at 10:00 A.M. at MCC of the Resurrection, 1919 Decatur Street.

The purpose of the Hispanic Americas District is to serve the Portuguese and Spanish-speaking people of the Americas.

Attending the Conference will be people from Mexico City and Monterrey, Mexico; Tucson, AZ; New York City, NY; Miami, FL; and Los Angeles, CA. The Conference will precede the 10th General Conference of the UFMCC, and will discuss goals and how to start church groups in other countries within the Americas.

For contact person in Mexico City write to Sr. Juan Doner, Murillo 33, Col Mixcoac, Mexico 19, DF. In Monterrey contact Sr. Ronald Peck Gral., Trevino 423 Ote., Monterrey, Nuevo Leon Mexico. In Tucson contact the Rev. Bern David, 349 W. 35th St., South Tucson, AZ 85713. In New York City contact the Rev. Jose Parets, P.O. Box 4552, Long Island City, NY 11104. In Miami contact the Rev. Jose Cruz, P.O. Box 370731, Miami, FL 33137. In Los Angeles, contact the Rev. Jose L. Mojica, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029.

For more information or for material in the Spanish and Portuguese languages concerning the Hispanic Americas District or U.F.M.C.C., contact the Rev. Mojica at the above address. ●

PRIMERA CONFERENCIA DEL DISTRITO HISPANO DE LAS AMERICAS

El Distrito Hispano de las Américas tendrá su primera reunión distrital el día 2 de agosto de 1981 en MCC Houston. Esta conferencia precedera a la Conferencia Internacional de la Fraternidad.

El propósito del Distrito es el servir a las personas de habla española y portuguesa de las Américas.

Asistiran a ésta conferencia personas de Ciudad México y Monterrey en México; Tucson,AZ; New York City, NY; Miami, FL; Los Angeles,CA y estaremos discutiendo nuestras metas y como empezar nuevas iglesias en otros paises de las Américas.

Para ponerse en contacto con Ciudad México escriba a Sr. Juan Doner, Murillo 33, Col. Mixcoac, México 19, Distrito Federal; en Monterrey con el Sr. Ronald Peck, Gral. Treviño 423 Ote. Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, México; en Tucson con el Rev. Bern David, 349 W. 35th Street, South Tucson,AZ 85713; en New York City con el Rev. José Parets, POB 4552, Long Island City, NY 11104; en Miami con el Rev. José Cruz,POB Miami, FL 33137; en Los Angeles con el Rev. José L. Mojica, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd. Suite 304, Los Angeles,CA 90029.

El Sr. Ernesto Borges, exhortador de ICM HISPANA, vendrá a Los Angeles a trabajar con el Rev. Mojica en el Ministerio Hispano. ¡BIENVENIDO!

Para más información o para recibir literatura en portugues o en español concerniente al Distrito Hispano de las Américas o de la Fraternidad haga el favor de ponerse en contacto con el Rev. Mojica a la dirección arriba mencionada.

Editorial Policy Revised

At the recommendation of the Interim Editor, the Board of Elders reviewed the existing Editorial Policy during its March 1981 meeting. The following is the Editorial Policy for IN UNITY as revised and adopted by the Elders.

EDITORIAL POLICY

IN UNITY, as the official organ of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, will seek to achieve the following goals, consistent with the purposes and beliefs of the Fellowship as stated in its Bylaws:

1. To inform the members, active non-members and the general public of the activities and development of the Fellowship and its churches, ministers and people;

2. To challenge its readers and to stimulate discussion on pertinent topics; and

3. To entertain its readers in a manner consistent with the character, beliefs and purposes of the Fellowship.

Articles on Fellowship news, news of the gay and lesbian community at large, feedback to the magazine and other articles relevant to the spiritual, intellectual and community life of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches are encouraged.

Literary and graphic contributions from the readership will be encouraged. Only the "first North American serial rights" of published materials are reserved to the magazine. All other rights will revert to the owner of the material following publication, unless specifically granted to the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches in writing.

Only published materials which are attributed to the General Conference or to the Board of Elders reflect the official positions or opinions of the Fellowship. All other published materials reflect only the opinion of that contributor, and do not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches or its Board of Elders.

All submitted materials, including letters for publication, must be signed to be considered for publication. The Editor may accept and/or modify any submitted material on the basis of potential libel or invasion of privacy.

At the discretion of the Editor, submitted material will be accepted and/or modified within the limitations of available space and its relevance to issues of current importance and interest to the readership.

The Editor will accept and/or modify submitted material consonant with its consistency with this Editorial Policy, with the stated beliefs of the Fellowship, and with generally accepted canons of journalistic ethics.

IN UNITY will seek not to be sexist, racist or ageist in its content. The language of any submitted material should be inclusive of gender, race and age whenever possible, as reflected in the current guidelines of the General Conference, or the Editor will modify the language to meet this requirement.

The currently effective Doctrinal Statement of the Fellowship will be reproduced in an appropriate location within each issue of IN UNITY.

UFMCC DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Christianity is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and is the religion set forth in the Scriptures. The Old Testament foretells him, the New Testament presents him, and the Christian Church proclaims him in every age and in every land.

Founded in the interest of offering a church home to all who confess and believe, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches moves in the mainstream of Christianity.

Our faith is based upon the principles outlined in the historic creeds: Apostles and Nicene.

We believe:

1. In one triune God, of one substance, in the persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, God being the Creator of all, the Prime Mover and Spirit of the Universe.

2. That the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, showing forth God to every person through the law and the prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus Christ.

3. That Jesus . . . The Christ . . . historically recorded as living some 2,000 years before this writing, is the Father's most divine Son, as well as being the Son of Man, born of Woman. And that by total subservience to God, the Father, Jesus has demonstrated once and forever that all people are likewise Children of God, being spiritually made in God's image.

4. That the Holy Spirit is God making known God's love and interest to all people. The Holy Spirit is God, available to and working through all who are willing to place their welfare in God's keeping.

5. Every person is justified by Grace to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

6. We are saved from loneliness, despair and degradation through God's gift of grace, as was declared by our Master. Such grace is not earned, but is a pure gift from a God of pure love. We further commend the Fellowship of the Faithful to a life of prayer; to seek genuine forgiveness for unkind, thoughtless, and unloving acts; and to a committed life of Christian service.

7. The Church serves to bring all people to God through Christ. To this end, it shall arrange for regular services of worship, prayer, interpretation of the Scriptures, and edification through the teaching and preaching of the Word.

(Article III, Section A of UFMCC By-Laws)

RESOURCES

PARENTS OF THE HOMOSEXUAL; David and Shirley Switzer; Westminister Press (Philadelphia); 1980; paperback; 118 pages; $5.95. (Part of CHRISTIAN CARE SERIES; Wayne E. Oates, Ed.)

--reviewed by W.B. Stevens

With so many gay and lesbian Christians dealing (or preparing to deal) with the problems of possible self-disclosure to parents, *Parents of the Homosexual*, by David and Shirley Switzer, could not be more relevant. Combining their respective experiences in the counseling and pastoral fields, this husband/wife team provides an insightful yet tender discussion of how parents can deal with the myriad of potential problems surrounding this experience. They observe that the process of "coming out" is "a deeply emotional issue for many parents, and we want to try to deal with it at that level of seriousness."

Parents of the Homosexual encourages the parent to move toward reconciliation within the family unit, and attempts to work through the very real emotional issues which arise within the parent. The Switzers make it very clear that most parental reactions toward homosexuality are conditioned by society's programming, and *not* by the internalization of scriptural principles regarding the subject. They admonish their readers to deal first with the emotional issues: "Regardless of what you believe about these issues, you need to realize that your positions on them must not be allowed to interfere with your dealing effectively with the confusion and emotional distress which you as parents are probably undergoing, with the stress that is usually placed on the relationship between yourselves, and with your need to understand and have a good relationship with your son or daughter."

The Christian parents who read this book should be comforted with the knowledge that their emotional struggles are normal, and can be short-lived if dealt with openly. While they may not put the book down convinced that scripture condones the homosexual condition, the seed will at least be planted which will question the traditional church condemnation of homosexuality.

While written primarily to parents, the book should also be helpful for the child who is considering self-disclosure to parents, other significant family members, or close friends. We children are encouraged to understand our parents' feelings (well-covered in the book), and be ready to offer loving support, even when we are the object of possible hurt feelings. Lesbians and gay men who read this book will be provided with a better understanding of most parents' perspective on learning that the child they thought they knew no longer exists.

Three cheers for this supportive Christian treatment of a significant rite of passage for gay children!

Women Drinkers Speak Out About Alcohol

WE ALL HAVE OUR REASONS may be the first film to explore the reality of drinking and women. In 1981, in Los Angeles, the film offers a brief reflection of this reality among women with high rates of alcohol use. Who are these women? Any mother, daughter, sister? For some women - adult daughters of alcoholics, lesbians, incest/child abuse survivors - alcohol use becomes alcohol abuse at 3 to 5 times the national average. This is part of the reality of drinking and women.

Filmed on location with interviews in women's bars, along the streets, and at the Alcoholism Center for Women, the film explores the impact of this drug in women's lives. What does life really feel like, with and without this drug?

WE ALL HAVE OUR REASONS was produced by Iris Films for the Alcoholism Center for Women. The film is available for rental. For information contact: Betty Ript, Alcoholism Center for Women, 1147 S. Alvarado St., Los Angeles, CA 90006; telephone: (213) 381-7805. *[Ed. Note: Rental information was not available at press time.]* *–Press Release*

OUT ART Exhibit

An exhibition of gay art, Out Art, is scheduled for exhibition at C.A.G.E., Cincinnati, Ohio, for June 1981. The purpose of the exhibition is to present a forum for art which deals directly with homosexual and lesbian images and relationships.

C.A.G.E., Cincinnati Artists' Group Effort, is a three year old arts organization in Cincinnati, Ohio, which was founded by artists for artists. The organization was formed to present an alternative to the area's gallery system, concerning itself with issues and aesthetics not handled elsewhere in the area. C.A.G.E. derives no percentage on sales resulting from the exhibition. C.A.G.E.'s galleries are located at 706 Walnut Street, midtown Cincinnati.

Inquiries should be directed to C.A.G.E./Out Art, Box 1362, Cincinnati, Ohio 45201. Telephone inquiries may be made, week nights 8-11, 513-221-6984, Hudson.

Press Release

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